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## Bradley's Dialectic

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A STUDY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
MALEBRANCHE  
HUME'S THEORY OF THE UNDERSTANDING  
AN ESSAY ON CRITICAL APPRECIATION

# Bradley's Dialectic

by

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## Preface

THE main aim of this work is two-fold. The primary objective is to bring out in somewhat simple terms the essential character of Bradley's dialectic. To that end, criticism of the dialectic is, for the most part, confined to a chapter on some basic difficulties in it, in order that excursions in criticism may not unduly complicate exposition of the central doctrine. Perhaps it ought to be said in passing that the difficulties considered in that chapter are not the only ones with which Bradley's dialectic seems to me to be infected. They were selected for emphasis because some selection was unavoidable and these difficulties seem to have been too generally neglected.

A parenthetical few words may be called for as to the sense in which the term "dialectic" is here used. In some quarters "dialectic" has been given a perverse significance. Thus it is frequently used to mean what is meant by "verbal". A line of argument that is considered to be no more than a matter of words is dismissed as being "dialectical". There would appear to be no etymological justification for this usage. In its most radical sense, "dialectic" means what is meant by "elucidation". A dialectic is a method or way of elucidation. The history of philosophy alone makes it clear that there are diverse methods of elucidation. But Hegel, and Bradley after him, claim there can be only one, the dialectic of relational essence; what Bradley calls "the relational way of thought". Bradley's dialectic is his method of elucidation.

It is rather difficult to avoid the unpalatable conclusion

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that those who, by virtue of temperament and training, are foreign to any form of systematic Idealism, find it easier to call down criticisms on Bradley than to follow him. And that is no more than natural, so long as the reader of a philosophy of Hegelian origins insists that it must square with Aristotelian logic. Hegel, and Bradley after him, repudiate the logic of contradictories and seek to replace it with the dialectic of contraries, which they call the true logic. Bradley denounces the Law of Identity as being a tautology and therefore inane. He then identifies the contradictory with the contrary, thus to proscribe the Law of Excluded Middle.

Now anyone who has the patience to examine this repudiation of the Law of Identity will see that it is no mere shift in doctrine. Rather it is a radical innovation in principle. For consider: on this view there may be no contradictories, as the contradictory is formulated by the Law of Non-contradiction. The Law of Identity being repudiated, the contradictory is identified with the contrary. That is why, in a word, there is on this view a middle term between any two co-opponents. And Bradley assumes, as would a thinker out of the tradition from which he largely derives, that Appearance, or everything short of Absolute Reality, is in process. Thus the middle term between any two differences is a moment of mediation in process, not a self-identical, static being. This moment of mediation Bradley calls relation; and the terms mediated he calls qualities.

For several reasons this repudiation of the Law of Identity and the identification of the Contradictory with the Contrary entail the consequence that the identity of no matter what is "relational". The theory of relational identity is the burden of the neglected chapter on *Relation and Quality in Appearance and Reality*. That neglected chapter of Bradley's "metaphysical essay" is the subject of the first chapter of the present work. In that chapter it is brought out that quality

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and relation mutually contribute to constitute the identity of each other. And this conception of relational identity as the essence of the internality of relations in Bradley is contrasted with each one of the ten senses of "internal relations" which have been made out by Dr. Ewing. This is followed by a brief chapter on Bradley's treatment of Space and Time, thus to afford an illustration of how Bradley applies the dialectic of relation and quality to two categories of Appearance.

At the end of the chapter on *Relation and Quality*, Bradley writes as follows, "The reader who has followed and has grasped the principle of this chapter, will have little need to spend his time upon those which succeed it. He will have seen that our experience, where relational, is not true; and he will have condemned, almost without a hearing, the great mass of phenomena." Accordingly, after reviewing Bradley's treatment of Space and Time, further consideration of the contrariety with which Appearance is infested "everywhere and always", as that is elucidated by Bradley in the remaining chapters of Part I, is omitted. Thus chapter III of the present work is concerned with the opening chapters of Part II—the Part of *Appearance and Reality* in which emphasis is laid on degrees of Reality. Bradley's arguments to his criterion of Reality, and the ways in which the dialectic of relation and quality yields his monism, are the main topics of this chapter, which leads us in chapter IV to the Internality of Thought and Reality.

In this chapter Bradley's conception of the nature of thought is considered in some detail. To that end, the working of thought in and through stages of judgement into more and more comprehensive degrees of Reality is emphasized in order to bring out the cardinal sense in which thought and Reality are internal to each other. In order that this conception of thought may be grasped, we must see the source of thought as being what Bradley calls "the this"

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and "the mine", or virtual immediacy. For in Bradley's view, thinking develops out of virtual immediacy into "the ideality of the finite" by virtue of the inherent self-transcendence of all psychical fact. Indeed, the "ideality" of the finite is the inherent self-transcendence of the finite, in so far as that self-transcendence is ideational in character. Moreover, the self-transcendence of psychical fact is seen to be the very process of fission in sentience by virtue of which differentiation or relation occurs. Thus, since thinking is the ideality of the finite, or moment of differentiation in experience, thinking is relational. The consummation of a process of thinking in judgement is the fulfilment of a thought. This is achieved in a synthesis of the initial content of the thought within a context of relations and qualities which differ from those wherein the thought thus consummated in judgement had its inception.

These considerations bring us to the coherence theory of truth and Reality, which is the main concern of chapter V. The nature of error as the relative privation of coherence in judgement, and the sense in which error is both unreal as a privation and real as some (however slight) degree or other of coherence, are brought out as a preface to Bradley's theory of truth.

On that theory, a judgement is more or less true as it is more or less self-coherent. And it is self-coherent to the degree to which it is internally related within the systematic Whole that is reality. The criterion of truth is comprehensiveness. The more comprehensive the scope of the qualities and relations that are the content of a judgement, the more fully the judgement is true.

The criterion of degrees of truth is likewise the criterion of degrees of Reality. An Appearance that is more comprehensively self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled than another appearance is the more real. Questions as to the explicit sense in which judgements and appearance are more or



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less coherent bring us to the principle of identity in difference which is the topic of the next chapter.

This principle arises out of the identification of the contradictory with the contrary, between whose terms there is a middle term. This middle term is the moment of mediation, differentiation, or partial identity between and in the terms thus mediated. The principle of identity in difference is the principle of the dialectic of relation and quality. For the moment of mediation—the middle term—is the moment of differentiation that is relation. And the terms mediated are the qualities that are thus related.

Since Appearance is everywhere and always relational, and the Absolute may not be a term in relation and remain Absolute, Bradley's relational dialectic poses a question as to what may be the relation of Appearance to Reality. That question is examined in chapter VII, on the relational and the Absolute, which is followed by a chapter on some basic difficulties in Bradley's dialectic. These difficulties converge on the radical point in principle that, for Bradley, identity is relational (in his sense of the term), not absolute or tautological, as in  $A$  is  $A$ . And that brings us to the second main objective of this work.

That aim is, in a word, to point out the disjunction between identity as relational, and identity as an absolute  $A$  is  $A$ . Since identity may not be both relational and absolute: since we may not both affirm and deny the Law of Identity: this is truly a disjunction, not a pair of alternatives.

It is a necessary condition of any coherent understanding of the dialectic, and of the concrete universal which it elucidates, that the notion of relational identity, or identity in difference, be borne in mind. For unless it be understood that by contradiction Bradley means what (to a non-Hegelian) is meant by contrariety, only bemused irrelevancies, such as Dr. Broad's monstrous assertions about Bradley's theory of relations, can result. And moreover, unless that

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cardinal point in principle be taken into account, a necessary condition of an understanding of the relational way of thought in any of its expressions, whether dialectical, political, or in economics, is thus ignored.

Something strangely like a creed of exclusive party loyalty seems to have infected students of philosophy in some quarters. The doctrinaire bigotry thus engendered is not the less deplorable because it professes to be intellectual. As a consequence of this single-minded devotion to non-Hegelian modes of philosophy, otherwise sensible men, who have avowedly steered clear of Hegel, take his name in vain with some abandon. These same men apparently sit down to read *Appearance and Reality* upon the thoughtless assumption that its major doctrine could only have originated on either or both sides of Didcot Junction. The misunderstandings that result from such cavalier procedure have made Bradley, in these same quarters, a synonym for nonsense.

Yet the dialectic that Bradley calls "the relational way of thought" formulates a mentality—an almost hopelessly romantic way of imagination and evaluation—that is abroad today in force, and we badly need to take account of it.

This commentary was commenced some eleven years ago during a memorable and very pleasant sojourn at Balliol. Since then, it has been recast several times, and each time the more severely limited in scope and detail in an endeavour to arrive at a comparative simplicity of treatment. The reader will find that Bradley's theory of relations is reiterated at certain junctures in the course of the commentary. In view of the basic significance of that theory in Bradley's dialectic, some repetition of it in certain contexts was deemed advisable.

The work owes more than could be even indicated to the Seminar of the late Professor H. H. Joachim on Hegel, and

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on Bradley, which it was my good fortune to attend throughout two years. It owes no less to the tutorial skill and kindness of Mr. J. D. Mabbott of St. John's. And it owes much to the benevolent ministrations of the late Professor J. A. Smith, whose frequent alarms and excursions over the perils lurking and working in the writings of his friend Bradley would have aroused the curiosity of a Bourbon. An acknowledgement of gratitude in this regard could only be so inadequate as to be virtually meaningless.

Students at Harvard, in the Seminar on Metaphysics with which I was charged during a visiting Lectureship in 1935, gave me many helpful criticisms of parts of the essay as it stood at that time. In that connection, I am particularly indebted to Dr. Milton Gross, now of Columbia University.

As in many other ways, I am gratefully and deeply indebted for critical instruction in systematic Idealism to discussions over a period of years with my colleagues, Professor G. Watts Cunningham and Dean George H. Sabine, as well as with Professor W. R. Dennes, of the University of California. These friends were also kind enough to criticize the work in manuscript form.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Oxford University Press for their kindness in allowing me to make extensive quotations from Bradley's works.

R. W. C.

SANTA BARBARA,  
*December, 1940*



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“But I clearly recognize that, if Not-A were taken as a pure negation, no compromise would be possible. You would then have to choose between the axiom of contradiction and the dialectical method.”

F. H. BRADLEY

## CHAPTER I

# The Dialectic of Relation and Quality

### I

IN the course of the first three chapters of his "metaphysical essay", *Appearance and Reality*, Bradley reaches a conclusion that is fundamental to his entire metaphysics. This conclusion, moreover, is valid for, and is variously illustrated by, the several arguments which constitute the succeeding chapters of Part I of that essay. "The reader who has followed and has grasped the principle of this chapter (*Relation and Quality*), will have little need to spend his time upon those which succeed it. He will have seen that our experience, where relational, is not true; and he will have condemned, almost without a hearing, the great mass of phenomena."<sup>29\*</sup>

Bradley arrives at the principle that is expounded in the chapter on relation and quality by way of an examination of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, and that between substantive and adjective; two of "the many ways in which we try to understand the universe." However fundamental, or however footless for such an attempt these ways be deemed, is a matter of but little moment, in Bradley's view. "From whatever point we had begun we should have found ourselves entangled in the same puzzles, and have been led to attempt the same way of escape." This way of escape is afforded by the principle

\* Unless it is otherwise indicated, all numerical references are to *Appearance and Reality*, 2nd edn., Oxford University Press.

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of the internality of relations. Bradley arrives at this principle in chapter III of Part I. In Part II of *Appearance and Reality* the internality of quality and relation turns out to be the Janus-faced principle at once of Appearance and of degrees of Truth and Reality.

Bradley takes it that the distinction between primary and secondary qualities is made in order to reconcile changing appearances with a belief in a changeless reality. This distinction is "easily disposed of." For those who make it admit that qualities appear only as conditioned in their existence. How, then, may we expect to say anything at all about qualities alleged to be unconditioned, as are those designated "primary" and "independent"? To call the changing and relative qualities "appearance", in contrast with a reality that is alleged to be permanent and absolute, is to accomplish nothing at all: for nothing is actually removed from existence by being labelled "appearance". "What appears is there, and must be dealt with; . . . ." <sup>12</sup> Moreover, extension, taken as devoid of secondary quality, is inconceivable: it "cannot be presented, or thought of, except as one with quality that is secondary." <sup>14</sup> The alleged reality of extension, as something independent of the qualities called secondary, is thus seen, Bradley thinks, to derive from a distinction in theory that is repelled by fact.

Then again, the line of reasoning by which the qualities called secondary are alleged to deserve the name holds with no less force of those qualities that are distinguished as being real in their own right. This means, to give the main point here but one illustration, that the example of the square tower which looks round at a distance, illustrates the conditional character of perceived extension quite as well as the example of the piece of wax illustrates the inconstancy of the temperature, odour, and colour of wax. Taken as a serious attempt at even a partial view of experience, any doctrine on which anything like the distinction



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between primary and secondary qualities would be a valid distinction between reality and appearance can hardly survive even a light attack of Berkeleian criticism.

The distinction between the substantive and the adjective, to which Bradley turns next, also is found to be of no avail as a satisfactory way of interpreting our experience. "We may take the familiar instance of a lump of sugar. This is a thing, and it has properties, adjectives which qualify it. It is for example, white, and hard, and sweet. The sugar, we say, is all that; but what the *is* can really mean seems doubtful."<sup>16</sup> A lump of sugar plainly is not any one, nor yet any set, or group, of its qualities. It is neither sweetness, taken alone, nor is it that quality *and* whiteness, *and* hardness, etc., taken in bare conjunction.<sup>16, 17</sup> The view that "the secret of the thing"<sup>16</sup> lies in the co-existence of these adjectives "in a certain way",<sup>16</sup> wholly fails to discover any real unity existing in and throughout them. Either the nature of a lump of sugar is exhausted in the sum of the co-existing adjectives which are in question, or that nature involves a substantive which is their persisting unity. Yet where, or how, is this substantive to be found? A substantive would be that which may not be a predicate. And whatever appears, it would seem, *may* be predicable of something else.

So much as this may suffice to indicate why Bradley concludes here that "we can discover no real unity existing outside these qualities, or again, existing within them."<sup>16</sup> He proceeds to suggest an alternative to any further search for a satisfactory conception of substance. On this alternative, the qualities which constitute a thing are held together, not by a substance in which they would inhere, but rather by their relations. "One quality, A, is in relation with another quality, B. But what are we to understand by 'is'?"<sup>17</sup> Surely not that "being in relation with B" *is* (identical with) A. Bradley does not here distinguish between the "is" of

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identity and the "is" of predication. For where there is no degree of identity in the constituent terms of a judgement, those terms stand together in bare conjunction. As so arranged, the terms would be related quite externally, the one to the other, were such an external relation possible at all. Since, as we shall find Bradley urging in detail, any external relation whatever can only fail to relate its alleged terms, the "is" of predication, taken as a (verbal) sign of conjunction, is ruled out by the rejection of all merely external relations.

Yet, in the judgement, "A is in relation with B", we surely do not mean that "being in relation with B" *is* A. Neither do we mean that "being in relation with B" *is* different from A. "And we seem unable to clear ourselves from the old dilemma. If you predicate what is different, you ascribe to the subject what it is *not*; and if you predicate what is *not* different, you say nothing at all."<sup>17</sup> Any conception of the thing on which it is a substantive complex of related qualities will thus fail to elucidate both the way in which the qualities may be predicated of relations, and relations may be predicated of qualities.

The way to resolve this dilemma, it may be suggested, is an evident and simple one: let us regard the relation of inherence as an external relation. In thus taking "is" to be the sign of a relation that is separate from, or independent of, its terms, we cease to regard that relation as being in any sense inherent in the terms it is said to relate. "Let us abstain from making the relation an attribute of the related, and let us make it more or less independent. 'There is a relation C in which A and B stand; and it appears with both of them.' But here again we have made no progress. The relation C has been admitted different from A and B, and no longer is predicated of them. Something, however, seems to be said of 'this' relation C, and said, again, of A and B. And this something is not to be the ascription of one to the

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other. If so, it would appear to be another relation, D, in which C, on one side, and, on the other side, A and B, stand. But such a makeshift leads at once to the infinite process."<sup>17, 18</sup> On this alternative, the phrase "stand in" takes the place of the term "is". Now we say not, "A is in relation with B," but rather, "A and B stand in relation C."

And so the question is raised as to the meaning of the phrase "to stand in" as that phrase is used in this statement. For, to say that A and B "stand in" a relation C, would seem to say something *about* A, and B, and C. "And this something is not to be the ascription of one to the other."<sup>18</sup> For, by hypothesis, any conception of a relation as inhering in its terms is excluded on this alternative. Still, it may be urged, the fact is that the phrase in question adds nothing to the meaning of the statement "A and B stand in a relation C." For that statement refers to no more than the relational complex A C B. That C relates A and B is a matter of fact which neither can nor need be explained.

On such a view of the matter as this, the relation C would be conceived of as quite independent of its terms. For to say that those terms (or any others) stand in that relation (or in any other), we are told, is not to say anything *about* A, C, and B: it is to say merely that we have A, *and* C, *and* B: where "and" is the enumerative, not the conjunctive "and". This being so, C is not even conjoined with A and B. It is quite independent of A and B. And as thus independent, the so-called relation C might as well be enumerated with other independent relations, such as R, and R'. For, as independent, the relation C requires no terms that it may be a relation. To such a relation, terms would be accidental: it could have no terms at all and still be a relation; for it is something that has its being independently of all terms. Yet this something is merely verbal. For to speak of a relation that is without terms is to speak of a relation that relates nothing, and so is not a relation at all.

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But why take it, one may ask, that the relational complex A C B is exhaustively described in and through an enumeration of its constituents, regarded as merely independent? To be sure, it may be said, A, and C, and B are independent of one another: yet they are so only in the sense that each one is what it is in its own right. The term A is A absolutely, rather than relatively; and that is all it means to say that A is A independently of all else. The intrinsic self-identity of A, of C, and of B, is not their separation from one another. For in the relational complex A C B you have A and B related by C. In other words, in the enumeration, A, and C, and B, the "and" is the conjunctive, *not* merely the enumerative "and".

Such an objection only raises all over again the question which we have been trying unsuccessfully to evade. For we must either deny or else affirm that this conjunctive "and" contributes to constitute the relational complex in question. If our attitude be that of denial, we are left with the bare complex A C B, whose constituents can only be enumerated. But if, on the other hand, we affirm that A C B are conjoined, then they are conjoined somehow, and not merely compresent.

Moreover, to say that the constituents of the relational complex A C B are conjoined, is to say something more than that there is the relational complex A C B; for it is to say something *about* those constituents, viz., that they are *conjoined*. "Something, however, seems to be said of this relation C, and said, again, of A and B. And this something is not to be the ascription of one to the other. If so, it would appear to be another relation, D, in which C, on one side, and on the other side, A and B, stand. But such a makeshift leads at once to the infinite process. The new relation can be predicated in no way of C, or A and B; and hence we must have recourse to a fresh relation, E, which comes between D and whatever we had before. But this must lead to another, F;

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and so on, indefinitely. Thus the problem is not solved by taking relations as independently real."<sup>18</sup> The relation C, regarded as quite independent of its terms, A and B, is then viewed as being merely compresent with them. As thus independent, C does not require A and B, or any other terms, that it may be a relation. Hence C would be a relation were it *without* any terms at all. And yet a "relation" that relates nothing is surely no more than a mis-use of the word.

The attempt to take relations as real independently of their terms, while at the same time their "connexity" is held to be their being joined with their terms, also is futile. For either this "being joined with" is something more than the independent relation, or else we are back where we were before. Yet it is precisely this "something more" for which the notion of independent relations cannot provide. And so, in a foredoomed attempt to supply the deficiency, another independent relation is posited in the relational complex. But this too can only fail to relate; hence the infinite process, and "we are forced to see, when we reflect, that a relation standing alongside of its terms is a delusion".<sup>18</sup> The attempt to understand experience through the notion of the thing and its qualities breaks down, no less when the thing is taken as a set of qualities related by an independent relation, than when a thing is taken to consist of qualities inhering in a substance, of which no positive definition, or description, can be given.

In view of the fact that Bradley's argument to his rejection of external relations has been taken for and quoted from as his positive theory of relations (as, for example, by Dr. Broad and Dr. Ewing), it may be well at this juncture to point out that such is not the case. The conclusion of the argument in question is negative, and the text of it is part of the chapter on Substantive and Adjective, not of the following chapter on Relation and Quality, in which the basic content of Bradley's theory of relations is brought out.

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Bradley thinks it will be "evident" that the problem discussed in the chapter on substantive and adjective "really turns on the respective natures of quality and relation."<sup>21</sup> The notion of a substantive and its adjectives proves to be of no avail: that of a relational complex raises the question, what, if not a relation independently real, may relate the qualities of a complex?

At the outset of his elucidation of the meaning of "relation" and "quality" for his essay in metaphysics, Bradley foreshadows his main conclusion in that regard. "Our conclusion briefly will be this. Relation presupposes quality, and quality relation. Each can be something neither together with, nor apart from, the other; and the vicious circle in which they turn is not the truth about reality."<sup>21</sup> In following Bradley's main arguments to this conclusion, it may make our course the easier if we remind ourselves that Bradley, in his *Logic*, is constrained to reject any view of identity as absolute, and to adopt a theory of identity in difference. That conception of identity is to be the topic of a subsequent chapter. Nevertheless, the fact that Bradley denies the Laws of Identity and Non-Contradiction, as those laws are understood on an Aristotelian Logic, is fundamental to the nature of his dialectic. For that reason, it may be well to consider the point, albeit briefly, at this juncture.

In the *Logic*, Bradley writes: "The principle of Identity is often stated in the form of a tautology, 'A is A'. If this really means that no difference exists on the two sides of the judgement, we may dismiss it at once. It is no judgement at all. As Hegel tells us, it sins against the very form of judgement; for, while professing to say something, it really says nothing. It does not even assert identity. For identity without difference is nothing at all. It takes two to make the same, and the least we can have is some change of event in a self-same thing, or the return to that thing from some suggested difference. For, otherwise, to say 'It is the same as itself'

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would be quite unmeaning. We could not even have the appearance of judgement in 'A is A', if we had not at least the difference of position in the different A's; and we can not have the reality of judgement, unless some difference actually enters into the content of what we assert."\*

Any genuine judgement, we are then told, will assert unity in diversity, not the barren identity of the tautology "A is A". Judgement may not exist in the absence of either the differences or the unity. Unless the different constituents of a judgement are in some sense united in it, there is no judgement but, at best, an association of ideas. And unless it be differences that are said to be in union there is no judgement, but rather the utterance of mere tautology, and so no movement in thought at all.

If the formula of judgement may not be A is A, no more may it be A is B. For in this latter form, we assert (it is assumed) that A is identical with, or strictly the same as, B. Therefore we are confronted by a dilemma: on the one alternative we assert about A nothing at all; on the other, we say that A is what it is not—viz., B.

The error that sustains this dilemma and from which it derives may be brought to light by considering the nature of the contradictory. "We have to avoid, in dealing with Contradiction, the same mistake that we found had obscured the nature of Identity. We there were told to produce tautologies, and here we are by certain persons forbidden to produce anything else. 'A is not not-A' may be taken to mean that A can be nothing but what is simply A. This is, once again, the erroneous assertion of mere abstract identity without any difference."† That assertion is erroneous because it rests upon the assumption of pure negation. Indeed, that false assumption is at the basis of the entire erroneous matter. For the assumption that A simply is not B brings us ineluctably to the conclusion that A is A, irrespec-

\* *Logic*, 2nd edn., p. 141.

† *Ibid.* p. 146.

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tive of its relations. And that conclusion entails the above-mentioned dilemma.

For this reason, among several others, there can be no place in logic for the notion of mere negation. "The contradictory idea, if we take it in a merely negative form, must be banished from logic. If not-A were solely the negation of A, it would be an assertion without a quality, and would be a denial without anything positive to serve as its ground. A something that is only not something else, is a relation that terminates in an impalpable void, a reflection thrown upon empty space. It is a mere nonentity which can not be real."\* In short, mere negation is groundless verbiage. Every significant negation presupposes a positive ground. We can not and do not deny a predicate of a nothing; rather, we deny it of a subject on the ground that this subject possesses a quality which is incompatible with the predicate of our negative judgement. ✓

Thus, for Bradley, the negative judgement does not express bare otherness, or mere negation, between the terms of which there would be no middle ground. Hence Bradley denies that the logical form of the contradictory, within which no middle term is possible, and the logical form of the contrary, within which a middle term is always at least possible, are distinct; and he largely identifies them. "But then this positive ground, which is the basis of negation, is not *contradictory*. It is merely discrepant, opposite, incompatible. It is only *contrary*."\*

The notion of the contradictory, as that term is customarily understood with reference to the square of opposition, must be banished from logic. The contradictory means very largely what is meant by the contrary. No rule that would comprehend the scope of the contrary could be formulated. For "contrary opposition is indefinitely plural. The number of qualities that are discrepant or incompatible with A, can-

\* *Ibid.*, p. 123.



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not be determined by a general rule. It is possible of course to define a contrary in some sense which will limit the use of the term; but for logical purposes this customary restriction is nothing but lumber. In logic the contrary should be simply the discrepant.”\* The contradictory is in the main one with the contrary, and that is simply the discrepant. Thus, wherever Bradley writes of a relational situation as being self-contradictory he means not what a reader steeped in the Aristotelian tradition would erroneously take him to mean; rather, he means that the terms and relations in question are respectively contraries, and that by virtue of these contrarieties the relational situation is self-discrepant.

It may help to avert another misunderstanding if, at this juncture, we pause to ask how we are to take the term “appearance”, as used by Bradley. Is it the name of a static veil of qualities and relations which stands between us and the really real? Now it will be recalled that there is a tradition on which what is in becoming is appearance and appearance is what is in becoming. Readers of Bradley will recall how he writes of an “infinite process” in relations; of a “principle of fission which conducts us to no end,”<sup>26</sup> of relations that “break out”, and “fall between” qualities in appearance; and of a “what” being “in collision” with another such. Again, appearance is “taken up into” the eternal Absolute. These samples of Bradley’s idiom could easily be multiplied *ad nauseam*. If one were to take it that, for Bradley, “appearance” is the name of a static veil, one would have to take this idiom as mere metaphor. In the static there may be neither process, infinite or otherwise; nor fission, whether endless or not. The static excludes whatever might “break out”, or “fall” no matter where, or be in a “collision”. And to take Bradley as writing metaphysical irrelevance would be to beg the question of the meaning of his writing altogether. Appearance is not static:

\* *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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rather appearance is in becoming; in it there is, Bradley finds, an infinite *process*, an unending *fission*, in and through which relations do *break out* and *fall between* qualities. As contrasted with the eternal, self-identical Absolute, appearance is what is becoming.

On the view that identity is absolute, the question as to how self-consistent judgements about becoming may be made is, to be sure, an old one. If A is A absolutely (rather than relatively), it is hard to see how A could become Y. For in the course of the process A, Ay, Ayy, . . . Y, there would finally be a point at which A is no longer A, and is not yet Y. On a view of identity as absolute, there could be no middle term in and through which the contradiction in judgements about change might be sublated. In Hegel's smaller *Logic* the initial middle term is becoming; i.e. the synthesis of being and non-being. "Being is the notion implicit only": no case of mere being is to be taken alone, but only as the contrary of non-being. The resulting alternation in thought between being and non-being discloses itself as a process of becoming determinate, and so we find these primary contraries taken up into the category of Becoming.

Bradley not only rejects Hegel's "ballet of bloodless categories", he finds the dialectic of contraries incompetent to achieve a self-consistent elucidation of the two contraries that are for him the characteristics of Appearance everywhere and always; viz., quality and relation. Now, for reasons to which we proceed, should we attempt to illustrate Bradley's conception of relation by thinking of a relation defined as a universal that requires at least two particulars for its illustration, our attempt could only be irrelevant. And were a sense-quality, thought of as self-identical, taken to illustrate Bradley's view of quality, this again would be a mistake. For self-identical relations and qualities may not become; they are what they are. Therefore they may not be taken as illustrations of Bradley's view of relation and quality.

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On that view, "quality" is the name of any moment of experience wherein immediacy is dominant and differentiation is recessive. The main point here may be illustrated by the process of cell-fission. If we attend mainly to the new cells that are thus emerging, what is then most immediate or qualitative will be dominant in our experience. If, on the contrary, our attention emphasizes the mediation or differentiation thus in process, then relation will be dominant, while quality is recessive.

Thus conceived of, "Qualities are nothing without relations. In trying to exhibit the truth of this statement, I will lay no weight on a considerable mass of evidence":<sup>21</sup> all that evidence, indeed, which goes to show how qualities are varied in fact by changes in their relations. "But I will not appeal to such an argument, since I do not see that it could prove wholly the non-existence of original and independent qualities."<sup>21, 22</sup> Instead of an appeal to extensive matters of fact, Bradley proceeds to offer a demonstration *a priori*.

Any attempt to arrive at a relationless quality by abstraction could only fail. The process of abstraction is a process of differentiation, and so that process, like any other, is relational.

Again, we should be thwarted were we to "appeal to a lower and undistinguished state of mind, where in one feeling are many aspects. . . . I admit the existence of such states without any relation, but I wholly deny there the presence of qualities".<sup>22</sup> For these felt aspects are not qualities if they are quite undifferentiated, and if they are differentiated, then, by that very fact, they are related. "In short, if you go back to mere unbroken feelings, you have no relations and no qualities. But if you come to what is distinct, you get relations at once."<sup>22</sup> Where there are no distinctions in feeling, there are no qualities: where there are qualities, there are distinctions; and, by that very fact, relations.

To this, Bradley thinks it will be answered that though

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the process of distinguishing qualities be relational, still that process of making these distinctions is not essential to the qualities thus distinguished. It will be acknowledged, Bradley thinks, that "as you say, what is different must be distinct, and in consequence, related."<sup>22, 23</sup> But, it will be objected, the relation that is the process of making distinctions does not belong to the qualities that result. They are differentiated by relations which depend in no wise on the respective characters of the qualities they relate. And so these qualities and their relations are in no sense determined or conditioned by each other. Moreover, these qualities, though different from each other, are different intrinsically, each one in its own inalienable right.

For such reasons as these, it may be urged that relationless qualities may exist in abstraction. For the process of abstraction, even though it be relational, is not essential to the quality abstracted. And the quality itself is not altered by being abstracted. "But such an answer depends on the separation of product from process, and this separation seems indefensible. The qualities, as distinct, are made so by an action which is admitted to imply relation. They are made so, and, what is more, they are emphatically kept so. And you cannot ever get your product standing apart from its process. Will you say, the process is not essential? But that is a conclusion to be proved, and it is monstrous to assume it."<sup>23</sup> The force of this reply begins to be felt as Bradley goes on to develop his argument that the being of quality implies relation.

Bradley assumes that a difference is a relation and that a relation is a difference. His main point here is that where there are different qualities, there are qualities related by their differences. "For consider, the qualities A and B are to be different from each other; and, if so, that difference must fall somewhere. If it falls, in any degree or to any extent, outside A or B, we have relation at once. But, on the other

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hand, how can difference and otherness fall inside? If we have in A any such otherness, then inside A we must distinguish its own quality and its otherness. And, if so, then the unsolved problem breaks out inside each quality, and separates each into two qualities in relation. In brief, diversity without relation seems a word without meaning.”<sup>24</sup> Either the difference between A and B, in virtue of which they are distinct, “falls outside A or B,” thus to relate them; or, that difference “falls within” A and B respectively, thus to differentiate each one of them within itself. On the latter alternative, the moment of relation would break out within A, and within B. Hence the difference that differentiates A and B must fall “outside”, or “between”<sup>24</sup> them; and thus “we have relation at once.”<sup>24</sup>

For example, in the very incipience of a process of cell-fission the incipient differentiation “must fall somewhere”. And it falls “outside” or “between” the incipient cells in the observable sense that it is their differentiation. As soon as we notice this, then (on the assumption that differentiation, or difference, is relation), we are aware of relation at once. For we are then aware of the difference in virtue of which the incipient qualities are differentiated, or related. Were a quality without relations in this sense of “relation”, it would be in no wise different from anything else, and so would fail to be a quality at all.

To be sure, no fixed line between a differentiation, and what is thus differentiated, can be drawn and maintained in experience. For any relation, and any quality, will be in process. As the incipient qualities become more and more determinate, their differentiation alters; and, as their differentiation becomes the more marked, the qualities alter. “Hence the qualities must be, and must *also* be related. But there is hence a diversity which falls inside each quality. Each has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation.”<sup>26</sup> In order that a quality may

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be distinct, it must be differentiated from other qualities. This differentiation is no separate relation: rather, it contributes to constitute what it differentiates. Thus, in so far as A is quality, A is not relation; and yet, that it may be distinct, A must be both itself and its differentiation. "A is both made, and is not made, what it is by relation; and these different aspects are not each the other, nor again is either A. If we call its diverse aspects  $a$  and  $\alpha$ , then A is partly each of these. As  $a$ , it is the difference on which distinction is based, while as  $\alpha$  it is the distinction that results from connection. A is really both somewhere together as A ( $a-\alpha$ ). But (as we saw in chapter II) *without* the use of a relation it is impossible to predicate this variety of A. And, on the other hand, *with* an internal relation A's unity disappears, and its contents are dissipated in an endless process of distinction. We, in brief, are led by a principle of fission which conducts us to no end."<sup>26</sup> Without a relation, A would be undifferentiated, and so would be nothing at all. With a relation, A is at once the  $\alpha$  that is differentiated, and the  $a$  that is the differentiation. Thus "A is partly each of these". Neither  $\alpha$  nor  $a$  is the other, "nor again is either A"; for  $\alpha$  is what is differentiated, while  $a$  is the differentiation. And this differentiation,  $a$ , is essential to the  $\alpha$  that it differentiates.

That is why "A is both made, and is not made, what it is by relation. . . . It may be taken as at once condition and result, and the question is as to how it can combine this variety. For it must combine this variety. For it must combine the diversity, and yet it fails to do so".<sup>26</sup> A must be at once  $\alpha$ , the aspect differentiated, and  $a$ , the aspect of differentiation. Without  $\alpha$  there is nothing differentiated, and so no quality: without  $a$  there is no differentiation and so nothing at all.

A is at once itself  $\alpha$ , *and* its differentiation  $a$ : and this identity of A, which is  $a$ , implies its differentiation, which is

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a. Thus the quality A is the moment of immediacy *a*, and the moment of mediation *a*, by which that moment of immediacy is differentiated from other qualities and relations. In brief, that A may be at all, it must be at once what falls within itself, and what falls between itself and all else. Thus A both is itself, and is transcendent of itself. No quality, then, will be self-sufficient or self-contained; no quality will be self-identical. For that in virtue of which a quality is distinct will fall beyond that quality. Yet, at the same time, that differentiation will be essential to that quality. For without that differentiation, the quality would not be differentiated, as it is differentiated, and thus would not be the quality it is. Hence no quality is wholly self-consistent; and that means, for Bradley, that no quality is wholly intelligible by the relational way of thought that is ineluctably ours.

Thus, "we have found that qualities, taken without relations, have no intelligible meaning. Unfortunately, taken together with them, they are equally unintelligible".<sup>25</sup> So far, we have noticed that relations without qualities would be relations that relate nothing, and so fail to be relations at all. And we have noticed that qualities without relations would be undifferentiated, and so would be not many, but one. That there might be a plurality of qualities without relation is impossible. Yet, taken together with its relations, we have seen that no quality is wholly self-consistent, or intelligible.

The same difficulty appears when experience is "taken from the side of relations. They are nothing intelligible, either with or without their qualities".<sup>27</sup> As relations apart from qualities are a delusion, so together with quality they are in no finite context completely intelligible. For that a relation may differentiate its terms, it must "penetrate and alter" them, and so be implicated in their respective natures. Yet, that this differentiation may not disappear

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altogether, it must "fall" to some extent "between" the qualities which it differentiates, and so relates. A relation thus involves within itself a contrariety: it must be at once implicated in and transcendent of its qualities. And so "again we are hurried off into the eddy of a hopeless process, since we are forced to go on finding relations without end."<sup>28</sup> Then again, and on the other hand, in so far as a relation or differentiation is implicated in its qualities, it does not fall between them. In this respect a differentiation fails to be a relation at all. Yet in so far as a differentiation falls between qualities, it is outside them both, and so again fails to relate them.<sup>27, 28</sup>

Hence no moment of differentiation may be absolute. In a process of fission, no absolute distinction is to be found between the moments of quality and the moments of differentiation. There is "a diversity which falls inside each quality. Each has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation."<sup>26</sup> Likewise, each relation has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by its terms. Qualities taken without relations or as absolute, and relations as absolute or without qualities, are both, Bradley finds, inconceivable. Yet qualities, taken as moments of immediacy that are at once made by and essential to their differentiations, are in no case absolutely self-identical; for they are differentiated by their relations. And so their respective identities are relational, not absolute. Likewise, relations taken as moments of differentiation that are at once implicated in and transcendent of their qualities, are in no case absolute (or separate) relations, for they involve within themselves that infinite regress in relational identity which is the principle and content of degrees of truth and reality.\*

In a posthumously published essay, *Relations*, Bradley reverts to his point about relations being less than wholly self-consistent and intelligible. "A relation (we find) holds

\* *Collected Essays*, pp. 634-5.



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between its terms, and no term (we find) can itself be or become a 'between.' On the contrary, in order to be related, a term must keep still within itself enough character to make it, in short, itself and not anything diverse. And again, while the relations are not the terms and the terms are not the relations, neither the terms nor the relations can make that whole, in which nevertheless we find them. For the terms and the relations (we have seen) cease as such to exist, unless each maintains itself against whatever is not itself but is outside. And the attempt to find the required unity and totality in the terms and the relations taken somehow together must end obviously in failure."\* The attempt in question can end only in failure because neither the terms of a relational situation, nor their relation, may be self-consistent, or self-identical. For each one of the two terms will be a moment of immediacy, while, at the same time, it will transcend itself in being continuous with the differentiations by which these terms are differentiated.

Likewise, these differentiations will be internal to, or confluent with the terms they relate; while, at the same time, they will fall between and thus transcend them. This is why "relation both is and is not what may be called the entire relational situation, and hence in this respect contradicts itself." A relation *is* the whole relational situation in the sense that it is what differentiates the qualities of that situation. These qualities, were they differentiated otherwise, would be different qualities. Conversely, were the qualities of the situation different, their differentiation also would be different. As thus determining the qualities of the situation, and so its own character as a differentiation, "a relation to be actual cannot itself be less than all and everything that makes the entire relational fact".† For it is in virtue of the relation that the qualities which it differentiates are the distinct moments in process which they are. In a case of

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 634-5.

† *Ibid.*, p. 636.

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cell-fission, the qualities which are being differentiated are confluent with their differentiation; as, likewise, that relation is continuous with those qualities. At any two points in the process of fission, this relation may be marked off from its qualities, and its qualities thus will be marked off from their relation; but no such distinctions may be final for theory. For the distinctions in question would themselves be differentiations. These relations would break out, on the one hand, between the moments of fission which we had marked off as qualities, and, on the other, between what of the process would then be marked off as the differentiation of those new qualities. This "what" thus would become a quality in its own right: for it would itself be differentiated by the distinctions in question. Plainly such distinctions might be multiplied indefinitely within a process of becoming. Since to make distinctions *ipso facto* is to relate, there can be no limit to the relational constituents of a relational situation.

Yet "This on the other hand must be denied. For a relation is not its terms, but, on the contrary, it is between them. And though the terms may 'enter into the relation', yet, if they were nothing beyond it, they obviously would no longer be terms."\* In this sense, relations pervade and determine the character of that partial whole; and thus they may be said to be not less than "all . . . that makes the entire relational fact." Still, in no case is the differentiation identical with the differentiated. The qualities differentiated are to be sure continuous with their relation. Yet that either quality or relation may be at all, each must be distinct. ✓

That there may be qualities at all, distinctions must occur or be made, and no distinction in appearance may be ultimate. Once the differentiation is marked off, it is itself thus distinguished in being singled out; and hence between it and the initial qualities, fresh relations break out with *their* qualities.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 636.

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No distinction, no differentiation in process, may be self-sustaining or absolute. For a differentiation will be at once continuous with its qualities *and* distinct from them. In virtue of that distinction, and no matter where in the process it may break out, or where it be discriminated, a fresh relation, with its own qualities, then appears. This new relation, though continuous with its own qualities, nevertheless is different from them. And so, again, there appear fresh relations with their new qualities.

The notion of independent relations, we have seen, yields an "infinite process" in relations that do not relate: the dialectic of relations which differentiate their terms exhibits a process wherein neither the differentiation itself, nor the quality differentiated, is absolute in its own right, or self-identical. Hence the conclusion that no relational situation is wholly self-consistent, or intelligible.

Thus we may come to see that "Every relation (unless our previous inquiries have led to error) has a connexion with its terms which, not simply internal or external, must in principle be both at once".\* A relation must be internal to its terms in the sense that, as their differentiation, it contributes to constitute their qualitative character: yet, if it is not to disappear altogether, a relation must, to some extent, "fall between" its terms. And in that sense a relation is at once internal and external to the qualities which it differentiates.

It is sometimes said that the "internality of relations" means for Bradley simply this: any alteration in a relation *ipso facto* is an alteration in its terms, and any alteration in either term *ipso facto* is an alteration in the relation and in the other term. To be sure, it would be difficult (without achieving flat irrelevance) to take Bradley as meaning less than this. Since a relation is what differentiates its qualities, those qualities are what they are in virtue of that differentiation. That is why any alteration in the relation *ipso facto*

\* *Ibid.*, p. 641.

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is an alteration in the qualities thus differentiated. And since the differentiation is what it is in virtue of the qualities which it differentiates, an alteration in either of these qualities *ipso facto* is an alteration in their differentiation, and in the other quality.

Yet, if this is the least that may be said in this connection, so much is far from enough. For such a bare statement of the matter might be taken badly amiss. It would allow one to think that for Bradley relations are "absolutely and merely internal"; i.e. exhausted in the character of their terms, as is the philosophical relation of resemblance for Hume. A difference or a resemblance which was absolutely internal would be wholly intrinsic to the different, or the resembling, terms themselves. A, in being A, would be different from B; and B, in being B, would be different from A, *not* in virtue of any differentiation or process that partially fell between them, but rather in virtue of the intrinsic character of A and of B. Yet in being intrinsically what they are, A and B are self-identical absolutely; and their *being* different is not a differentiation at all: rather, their being different is exhausted in the respective *beings* that are the intrinsically different qualities A and B.

The several ways in which Bradley elucidates his theory of relations, in the course of the dialectic of *Relation and Quality*, surely ought to suffice to make it clear that this is not his view of the matter. Moreover, in his unfinished essay on *Relations*, Bradley is at some pains to tell us what he considers to be the meaning of "external relation", and what he does *not* mean by the phrase "internal relation". "What should we mean (I will ask first) by a relation asserted as simply and barely external? We have here, I presume, to abstract so as to take terms and relations, all and each, as something which in and by itself is real independently. And we must, if so, assume that their coming or being together in fact, and as somehow actually in one, is due in

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no way to the particular characters of either the relations or the terms. From neither side will there be anything like a contribution to, or an entrance into, the other side—or again to, or into, that union of both which we experience as a relational fact. Undeniably the fact is somehow there, but in itself it remains irrational as admitting no question as to its ‘how’ or ‘why’. Or, if you insist on a reason, that would have to be sought neither in the terms nor the relation, but in a third element once more independently real and neither affecting, nor again affected by, either the relation or the terms. This, I suppose, is the way in which relations have to be understood, if you take them as external merely and also as ultimately and absolutely real.”\* As so conceived of, external relations would merely coexist with their terms. Moreover, that such a relation should coexist with any terms at all, rather than simply exist without terms altogether, would be a merely fortuitous happening. Then again, this so-called relation might as well be taken along with other termless relations, once the absurdity of a relation without terms is admitted. Yet the relational situation,  $A \ C \ B$ , is a unitary fact. And when  $A$  and  $C$  and  $B$  are taken respectively as external to each other, they do and may afford no explanation of the unity in which, nevertheless, they exist. Any resort to an intermediary, itself external, by which to relate  $A$  and  $C$ , and  $B$  and  $C$ , fails to explain the unity and leads at once to an infinite regress in relations that fail to relate anything at all.

Those of a positive turn of mind may object that in all this there is no unity that requires explanation. They may urge that the unity of  $A \ C \ B$  is exhausted in the coexistence of  $A$  and  $C$  and  $B$ . There are the terms; there is the relation; they coexist; and that is all there is to it. Yet, on any such view of the matter, the relation  $C$  still might be taken without any terms whatever. And to speak of such an entity as a

\* *Ibid.*, p. 642.

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"relation", would surely be to mis-use that word. "What (I ask next) should, on the other hand, be meant by a relation viewed as absolutely and merely internal? You, I presume, still in this case would continue to take the terms each one as, so far, in and by itself real, and as independent absolutely of any whole that could be said to contain them. And you would go on to attribute to the particular character of the terms, as so taken, some actual relation or relations which you find, as you say, to fall between them. Something like this, I suppose, is or ought to be meant by a relation which is asserted to be real ultimately and internal merely."\* Such a view of relations Bradley rejects as "ludicrous" when ascribed to his view of the matter.

One fundamental reason for this rejection derives from the theory of relations that is explained in chapter III of *Appearance and Reality*. There we find that a relation differentiates its terms and thus contributes to constitute their character; as in a process of fission, the growing differentiation is confluent with the developing cells thus related. Therefore, when there is alteration in the relation, there is *ipso facto* alteration in the cells or qualities that are differentiated by the relation. For it is in virtue of this differentiation that the qualities thus related are respectively what they are.

A quality would be "ultimately and absolutely real"† were its nature quite self-contained. Such an entity would be what it is in virtue of itself alone: and so it would be itself absolutely, without relation to anything beyond its own absolute nature. If two such entities were posited, it would follow, in Bradley's view, that any relation between them would be wholly exhausted in the respective characters of the two qualities posited. "Relations would be merely internal if, the terms being taken as real independently, each in itself, the relations between them (as a class, or in this or

\* *Ibid.*, p. 642.

† *Ibid.*

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that particular case) in fact arose or were due merely to the character of the terms as so taken.”\* This sentence is quoted from a note on the point in question made by Bradley for an earlier draft of his essay on relations. It expresses briefly Bradley’s lengthier statement of what he means by “a relation viewed as absolutely and merely internal”. To that lengthier statement he adds: “The idea, I would add, that I myself accept any such doctrine as the above seems to myself even ludicrous. And to whom, if to any one, it should be attributed in fact, I will not offer to discuss. In any case, to assume it as the necessary alternative, when the mere externality of relations is denied, is (I submit) an obvious, if perhaps a natural, mistake.”†

The mistake here consists in taking the terms of a relation as if those qualities were real absolutely, each one in its own right. Such a view is in flagrant opposition to the doctrine that is made out in the chapter *Relation and Quality*. To be a quality at all, is to be differentiated by a relation which thus contributes to constitute the quality which it differentiates. The identity of that quality implies this difference. But not this difference alone. In the relational situation A C B, the relation C differentiates A and B. That relation is implicated in their respective identities, and those qualities A and B imply that difference: were *it* otherwise, *they* too would be different. And the qualities A and B do not exhaust the content of experience. They will differ from qualities D, E, . . . n, as well as from the relation by which these other qualities are differentiated among themselves, *and* from all else. And so with B, D, E, . . . n: hence “identity implies difference”.

It may be objected that this well-known dictum is but a truism, almost obvious and no less empty. To be sure, identity implies difference: for A must be numerically different from other items, in order that A may be an item

\* *Ibid.*, p. 665.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 642-3.

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at all that could be identified by attention as that item. Such an objection is not wholly irrelevant, for it affords an example of a relation that is "merely internal". The items in question are different simply in virtue of themselves alone. Thus their difference from each other is merely internal to each one of them.

Again, if "resemblance" be taken to mean any case of a qualitative identity distributed in enumerably different cases of itself, then we have another illustration of a merely internal relation. For the resemblance here is the qualitative identity which is exhibited in two cases of itself. Were numerical difference, and resemblance, in this sense of the term, regarded as relations, the terms of those relations would be self-identical. For the numerically different items are what they are in virtue of each respective item itself; and the several cases of resemblance are qualitatively identical absolutely, without reference to anything beyond themselves. Moreover, were it suggested that all of the relations of which a quality might be possessed are "merely internal", then the identity of that quality could only be absolute, not relational. Since it would contain within itself all of its relations (so-called), that quality would be an entity quite in its own right: its identity would be not relative to anything beyond itself, but absolute.

What is absolutely self-identical is changeless and may not become. Yet Appearance is not changeless: it is in process of becoming. Now were we to attempt to view the differentiations within a process of fission as being merely internal to their terms, we could only succeed in ignoring altogether the becoming there in process. For such an attempt would end in seeing the terms as self-sufficient, each one within itself, and so without the existence of any differentiation or relation between them. Such terms would be self-contained; their identity not relational, but absolute; and their becoming in any sense would be impossible. And thus



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we see that "Every relation (unless our previous inquiries have led to error) has a connection with its terms which, not simply internal or external, must in principle be both at once".\* Relations must fall to some extent or to some degree between the qualities of a process. Otherwise those relations would fall wholly within their qualities, and so they would fail to connect them. If such relations were regarded not as differentiations at all, then they would be "merely internal"; as is the philosophical relation of resemblance for Hume; and so they would be in no wise distinct from the respective characters of their self-identical terms. If, on the other hand, the relations which a mistaken opinion allowed to fall within their qualities, still were taken to be differentiations, then fission would break out within each quality, and the old issue would be raised all over again.<sup>24-26</sup>

A relation, taken as a differentiation, will differentiate qualities, and so will fall to some degree between them. A relation will be at once internal and external; the former in so far as it contributes to constitute, or is confluent with what it differentiates; the latter, in so far as it falls between these qualities. Thus a relation will be at once involved in and transcendent of its terms. Likewise, a quality, in being differentiated, will be involved in its differentiation, while, in being a quality differentiated, it will transcend its relation.

And so a relation will have a being proper to itself only in so far as it transcends, and so *is* not, the very terms without which it is not a relation at all. Hence the contrariety, or "contradiction", which Bradley finds in the nature of relation. Likewise, a quality is immediate or qualitative only in so far as it transcends the very differentiations without which it would not be a quality at all. Thus, alike in its mediations or differentiations, and its immediacies or qualities, experience is found self-discrepant, or incoherent.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 641.

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Yet this incoherence is in no case absolute; for nowhere is an appearance self-identical. The identity of every quality, we have seen, implies its difference from all else. Any experience is thus related with all different experiences. In virtue of the unrestricted internality of relations and qualities, experience is a systematic whole within which there may be, and are, degrees of coherence in truth and reality.

### II

The characteristic nature of Bradley's theory of relations can be emphasized, perhaps, by comparing it with certain other views about relations which have been, and are, called "internal relations". The admirable elucidation of ten senses in which the phrase "internal relations" either is or may be used which Dr. Ewing gives us in his critical survey of Idealism, affords a convenient and comprehensive text for comparison. Moreover, sweeping and acute as is that elucidation, it would seem unduly to neglect what is, for British Idealism, the most germane sense of the phrase in question. "Bradley's actual argument against relations," Dr. Ewing says, "I need not discuss at length because it has already been answered by several different writers, and I do not think I have anything really fresh to add."\* Yet the fact that Dr. Ewing considers this one of Bradley's arguments to have been refuted, does not explain to us what Dr. Ewing takes to be Bradley's own theory of internal relations. He does say that "Bradley is commonly included among the supporters of internal relations". But of which one, if any, of Dr. Ewing's ten senses of "internal relations" Bradley is a supporter, we are left to find out for ourselves.

Now, though it be found that Bradley's theory of relations is radically different from any of the senses of "internal relation" with which Dr. Ewing is concerned, that contrast

\* *Idealism*, p. 147.

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in theory is not and is not to be taken as a criticism of Dr. Ewing's own account of the matter. Dr. Ewing gives the following statement of the first one of his ten senses of the phrase "internal relation". "In the first place it is sometimes said that all relations are internal in the sense that they all 'fall within the nature of the related terms'. This definition, while etymologically more justifiable than most, involves many ambiguities and confusions. If we mean by the nature of a thing its full nature and do not include only its essential characteristics, this may be interpreted as including everything which is predicable of it and so all its relational characteristics without exception, however unimportant they may seem. We may then say that any relation falls within the nature of both or all the terms that it relates, if by this is meant simply that, whenever  $r$  relates A to B, A has the characteristic of standing in the relation  $r$  to B and B has the characteristic of standing in the converse relation to A; but this will not carry us very far. It is an important fact about relations that no instance of a relation can occur as a self-subsistent entity, but only in conjunction with terms which possess the characteristic of standing in that relation; but if by 'nature' be meant essential nature it does not follow, at least without further argument, that relations fall within the nature of either or both related terms."\* Dr. Ewing goes on to point out still more ambiguities in this sense of the phrase in question. So much as this, however, may suffice for purposes of comparison. It is, presumably, clear that relations which "fall within the nature of the related terms" would be what Bradley calls "merely internal relations". We have seen that Bradley rejects this view, on which relations would be merely internal, as a relevant interpretation of his own theory of relations. The distinction between the essential and the accidental characteristics of a thing's nature, which Dr. Ewing goes on to make, is excluded

\* *Ibid.*, p. 119.

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on Bradley's view of the matter. The identity of A implies its difference from all else: the question of the importance, or the unimportance of many, if not almost all, of these differences for a given step in practical or theoretical life, is irrelevant to the wholly relational identity of no matter what. In this first sense of the phrase "internal relations", such relations would "fall within the nature of the related terms." Therefore they would be very like the merely internal relations which Bradley rejects. And as emended by a distinction between essential and non-essential relational characteristics, this definition is no less incompatible with a doctrine on which no relations are non-essential to the identity of any moment of appearance, or degree of Reality.

There is, moreover, a difference in principle between this sense of the phrase "internal relations", and Bradley's view of the matter. As an illustration of this, let us consider the following texts: "The contradictions which he (Bradley) alleges seem to arise through supposing that a relation must be treated either as a quality or as a third term. For in the former case it will qualify but not relate its terms, and in the latter case it needs a fresh relation to link it to each term and so *ad infinitum*." Thus, Dr. Ewing finds the ground of Bradley's arguments to the conclusion that any relational situation will be incoherent to some degree or other, in one of two alternatives, both of which fail to treat relations as relating anything. This would seem to say that Bradley ignored the question at issue; for he is alleged to have been concerned solely with entities (to call them that) which were not, and could not be, proper relations at all.

Dr. Ewing may think that the notion of relations treated as qualities is both self-evident in its bearing on Bradley, and transparently false on any view. His procedure at this point, however, is not that he goes on to justify his assertion of that notion as an alternative ground for Bradley's theory of relations, but rather that he proceeds at once to advance

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an alleged refutation of Bradley's rejection of independent relations. Thus, with regard to the point that such a "relation" can only fail to relate its terms, Dr. Ewing writes: "One might similarly argue that it was impossible to tie two things together with string because you would need another piece of string to tie the string to each object and so on for ever. The argument would be valid if each piece of string were so defective that it broke in the middle; similarly Bradley's objection would be valid of relations if and only if they did not fulfil their function of relating. Only then would they need another relation to do the relating for them. But in that case they would not be relations."\* Dr. Ewing's piece of string may well be a good illustration of a relation regarded as being a third term. But Dr. Ewing's opinion that Bradley's argument to the conclusion that any notion of such independent entities leads to an infinite process of relations that fail to relate, "would be valid if each piece of string used were so defective that it broke in the middle; similarly Bradley's objection would be valid if and only if they did not fulfil their function of relating", is difficult to accept. In his first sentence here, Dr. Ewing appears to be saying that relations, as separate entities or third terms, fail to be relations because they break in the middle, like pieces of defective string. In his second sentence, Dr. Ewing asserts that "similarly Bradley's objection would be valid if and only if" relations failed to relate. The two sentences together would appear to say that, as a relation will fail to relate if it is like a piece of string that breaks in the middle, so "similarly Bradley's objection" will be valid only on the assumption that relations fail to fulfil their function of relating. Thus, whereas in the first of these two sentences, Dr. Ewing is concerned with relations as separate entities, in the second of them he refers to relations without qualification. Yet he says that, as he argues in his first

\* *Ibid.*, p. 147.

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sentence, so "similarly" he may argue in his second sentence. But that would mean that the relations referred to in the first sentence are similar to those spoken of in the second. And, indeed, the two sorts of relation are similar: for like relations as third terms, the relations on which the validity of "Bradley's objection" is alleged to depend are relations which fail to relate.

Thus, immediately after the sentences in question, Dr. Ewing writes: "only then would they need another relation to do the relating for them. But in that case they would not be relations."\* It would seem that Dr. Ewing takes "Bradley's actual argument against relations", and "the contradictions which he alleges", to rest mainly, if not altogether, on a version of Bradley's argument to the rejection of separate relations. These "relations", we have noticed, may not relate anything, and so they fail to be relations at all. Yet this negative argument surely is not the substance of Bradley's "actual argument against relations" as real in their own right. Were it so, Bradley would hardly have found it necessary to follow up his argument showing the impossibility of separate relations (which falls in chapter II of *Appearance and Reality*), with the elucidation, in chapter III, of the contrariety that is of the essence of the relational situation. This positive dialectic depends on no assumptions about relations which do not relate, but rather on the character of relations which do relate the qualities they differentiate and thus contribute to constitute.

Directly after his statements last quoted above, Dr. Ewing goes on to offer a refutation, not of anything in chapter III, but of the notion which he has asserted to be the basis of Bradley's actual argument against "relations"; viz., that of relations which do not relate anything. "If, in A and B, r is really a relation, it relates A and B itself and does not require new relations to connect it to either, for the relational

\* *Ibid.*

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characteristic of standing in the relation is not itself a relation. To say that, because A is related to B by  $r$ , A must stand in the relation  $r$  to B, and therefore must be characterized by (i.e. stand in the relation of 'having as characteristic' 'to) the relational characteristic of standing in the relation  $r$  to B, and be characterized further by having the characteristic of being characterized by the relational characteristic of standing in the relation  $r$  to B, is only to say the same thing over again in different words, so that the so-called different relations which are supposed to constitute the infinite regress are really only more and more cumbersome ways of expressing the same relation."\* However sound this may be as a view about relations and terms that are self-identical, as a difficulty for Bradley's elucidation of the relational situation it is inane. For, as stated by Dr. Ewing, this view offers no explanation of how it is that  $r$  relates A and B. To say that  $r$  relates A and B because  $r$  is a relation, and that it is the nature of a relation to relate, is to be unreflectively assertoric. And that is not quite what Dr. Ewing says. He says that  $r$  "relates A and B itself and does not require new relations to connect it to either, for the relational characteristic of standing in the relation is not a relation".\* Thus in  $A\ r\ B$ , A has the relational characteristic of standing in  $r$  to B, and (that) B is characterized by the relational characteristic of standing in the relation  $r$  to A. "But what are we to understand here by 'is'?"

And that is Bradley's initial question at the outset of his arguments to show that the meaning of the statement, "one quality, A, is in relation with another quality, B", is not altogether explicit. We do not mean that "being in relation with B" is something different from B. Hence the dilemma of predication; a dilemma which may not be resolved by any distinction between the "is" of predication, and the "is" of identity. Thus we are forced to abandon the

\* *Ibid.*

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attempt to predicate relations of terms, or terms of relation. "Let us abstain from making the relation an attribute of the related," Bradley goes on to suggest, "and let us make it more or less independent. 'There is a relation C in which A and B stand; and it appears with both of them.' But here again we have made no progress. The relation C has been admitted different from A and B, and no longer is predicated of them. Something, however, seems to be said of this relation C, and said, again, of A and B."<sup>18</sup> In Dr. Ewing's view, what is thus said about A is that A is characterized by the relational characteristic of standing in C to B; and B is characterized by the relational characteristic of standing in C to A. Yet on this view the dilemma of predication remains. And the step which Bradley takes beyond his futile attempt to regard relations as attributes is not, by Dr. Ewing's view of the matter, even begun. Thus the explanation of the connexity of relations, by the notion of relational characteristics which characterize the terms which stand in those relations, does not so much as tend to refute Bradley's elucidation of the self-contradictory character of the relational situation, for it does not begin to follow through his reasoning in that regard.

In Dr. Ewing's immediately subsequent paragraph in this connection, he writes: "The same fallacy in a subtler form appears in Bradley's argument that each term 'has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation',<sup>26</sup> so that these two aspects will be again related and so on *ad infinitum*. The distinction, so far as I can understand it, is between A as abstracted from the relation and A as related. But what is the relation between these two aspects of A? Simply that the second includes besides the other characteristics of A the characteristic of standing in the relation, while the first does not do so. But this will not generate a second distinct relation between them and so on *ad infinitum*, unless it is assumed as before that A must have



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a relation to the characteristic of standing in any particular relation and that this relation must in turn be related to A by another relation.”\* Here again, the theory of relational characteristics is made to explain the connexity of relations. Since, however, that theory leaves unanswered Bradley’s initial question about the relational situation, it can hardly bear on Bradley’s actual views in the matter. We have noticed that a quality has a double character in that any quality is itself and transcends itself. The quality A is itself in so far as A is not the relations by which it is differentiated and made itself. Yet without those relations A could not be differentiated, and so A could be nothing at all. Hence, that A may be differentiated, it must transcend itself in the relations in virtue of which it is A. And there is no absolute line between the moment of immediacy that is the quality A, and the moments of mediation by which A is differentiated by its relations. Wherever the emphasis in feeling may distinguish immediacy from mediation, quality from relation, there a distinction is made. This distinction will be a fresh differentiation in appearance; a differentiation which will contribute to constitute the qualities thus differentiated. Thus we may find a relational regress in any relational situation.

Dr. Ewing has explained that, in his work on *Idealism*, “I did not say of which of my senses of ‘internal relations’ Bradley is a supporter because Bradley denied the reality of relations and therefore can not have held that relations really were internal in any of my senses or in any other sense”†. Thus Dr. Ewing reaffirms the statement, made in his *Idealism*,‡ that “Bradley regards relations as unreal. . . .” One would have thought it common property that Bradley denies reality to relations solely in the sense of the term

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 148.

† *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXXII, No. 10, p. 273.

‡ P. 123.

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"reality" in which the Absolute alone may be real. To say flatly that Bradley "denied the reality of relations", is to ignore Bradley's theory of degrees of reality. No relational situation is ultimate reality: but any relational situation will be real *to the degree* to which it is self-coherent and comprehensive.

Dr. Ewing has explained also that he did not consider Bradley's theory of relational identity in connection with his own account of internal relations, because that account threatened to become unwieldy.\* And therein lies the difference in principle between the internal relations with which Dr. Ewing is concerned, and Bradley's theory of relations. In Dr. Ewing's treatment of the matter, the identity of a relation, and of a term, is absolute, not relational, as is the case in Bradley's view. This is to say simply that such relations, and such terms, are taken by Dr. Ewing to be what they are, not in virtue of their respective differences from all else, but in virtue of what they severally and respectively are in and of themselves alone. As thus self-identical absolutely, and not relationally, such relations will be internal in senses that can only be as different from Bradley's view of the matter as are absolute and relational identity. This difference, moreover, is that of a disjunction: the identity of A may not be both absolute and relational.

This same difference in principle is again illustrated by the second of Dr. Ewing's senses of the phrase in question. "The second meaning of 'internal relation' is 'a relation essential to its terms.' This sense can easily be derived from the first if we interpret 'the nature of a thing' more strictly so as to exclude all characteristics which seem superficial."† Here again, and throughout Dr. Ewing's discussion of this sense, relations and terms are regarded as self-identical each one in its own right. It is only to be expected, therefore, that we find in this discussion no explanation of

\* *Jour. of Phil.*, XXXII, p. 273.

† *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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“being essential to” as meaning that relations contribute to constitute their terms; and that, in so far as they do so, relations transcend themselves as relations.

Dr. Ewing's third sense need not detain us. In this sense of the phrase in question, internal relations are implicitly reduced to qualities;\* and that is a “definite error”.† It is repudiated as an error by Bradley. “Fourthly, the internal view of relations may be taken as simply asserting the fact that relations involve some kind of genuine *unity* between their terms.” As Professor Laird says,‡ “Ultimately, . . . the question is whether a relation between things can describe a genuine connection or unity between the things. If it can, there is no mystery; for the fact, *ex hypothesi*, is intelligible. If it cannot, such relations do not relate and are unintelligible if they pretend to do what they cannot do.” It is plain that on Bradley's theory of relations, this view of the matter is not ultimate at all. For it offers no elucidation of how and why it is that relations relate their terms. A mere set of facts is not even its own description, much less any analysis which might explain the “genuine unity” of internal relations. For our main purpose in this connection, however, it is enough to notice that, with regard to the relations and the terms here in question, nothing is said which so much as suggests that their identity is relational.

This is also pretty plain in the case of Dr. Ewing's fifth sense of the phrase in question. “Professor Laird also criticizes strongly a certain interpretation of the internal relations view, which we may take as our fifth sense. ‘It is possible to assert with some confidence,’ he says, ‘that if A has some relation *r* to B, it is not only logically conceivable that A and B retain their character unmodified in the relation; but it is logically inconceivable that they should not do so.

\* A. C. Ewing, *Idealism*, p. 122.

† *Ibid.*, p. 122.

‡ *Knowledge, Belief and Opinion*, p. 214.

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Relations hold *between* terms, and form or express a tie *between those very terms*. Thus, in the propositions '3 is greater than 2' and '3 is greater than 1', one and the same 3 occurs in both propositions, not a 3 modified by its relation to 2 in the first instance and a different 3 modified by its relation to 1 in the second instance. Either the whole relational way of regarding things is mythopœic, or this identity of terms must be preserved."\* "Clearly he is right (Dr. Ewing continues) in holding that no tolerable view of relations can be incompatible with the fact that the same term may stand in different relations, and he is also, as I contend elsewhere, right in holding that it cannot be true that all relations alter or modify their terms, if by this is meant that they cause a change in their terms. If A and B are to stand in a relation at all they must first have a certain character of their own, and this character is not made by the relation in question. Relations, we may say then, are all external in the sense that any relation presupposes a certain character in the terms related which is itself not due to and not modified or constituted by the relation in question. But for all that it might still well be the case that the relation was internal in the different senses, discussed later, that its character followed from the character of the terms, and that the terms could not be the same if the relation were different."† On a logic of contradictories or of absolute identity, it would seem to be plain that, as Professor Laird says, it is "logically inconceivable" that A and B should be modified by 1, or by anything else. For, as intrinsically self-identical, A and B are changeless, and therefore not to be modified. For the same reason the number 3 of Professor Laird's first proposition would be qualitatively identical with the 3 of his second proposition.

\* *Knowledge, Belief and Opinion*, pp. 78, 79; cf. also Cook Wilson's *Statement and Inference*, Vol. I, p. 71.

† *Idealism*, pp. 125, 126.

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In Bradley's view, however, finite identity is not absolute but relational. Therefore, on this view, it is logically inconceivable that A and B should *not* be modified by their relations. For it is in virtue of those differences that A and B are differentiated from all else; and it is thus that their respective identities imply their difference from all else. This would have to be true likewise of the number 3 in Professor Laird's first proposition and the number 3 in the second proposition of his illustration. Since the two contexts are different the relations are different: hence the meaning of 3 in "3 is greater than 2" will be different from the meaning of 3 in "3 is greater than 1".

Again, if the view of identity as relational be left out of account (and we have noticed above Dr. Ewing's reason for not considering that view in connection with his discussion of internal relations), one may agree "that any relation presupposes a certain character in the terms related which is itself not due to and not modified or constituted by the relation in question". It would be impossible that they should be unmodified in any respect by the relations which differentiate them. For those terms would be what they are in every respect in virtue of their relations by which they were differentiated.

Dr. Ewing derives his sixth sense from a phrase taken from Bosanquet, who "defines internal relations as relations grounded in the nature of the related terms". It might be expected that any elucidation of this definition would be carried out in the light of Bosanquet's doctrine of the concrete universal. Yet Dr. Ewing says of the phrase in question: "By this must presumably be meant that their presence depends on and is determined, *either causally or logically*, by characteristics of their terms. This is undoubtedly true of some relations, e.g. the mathematical relations, also similarity and difference. That 7 is half 14 or that something blue differs in colour from something red can undoubtedly

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be deduced from the intrinsic nature of the terms." In view of these illustrations, and of what Dr. Ewing says about them, it would appear that he understands internality in this sense to be the "mere" internality of intrinsic similarity and intrinsic difference. This view of internality is, presumably, of fundamental importance on a logic of contradictories; but it is, as we have noticed above, ruled out by Bradley's conception of identity as relational.

Of the remaining four of Dr. Ewing's ten senses, the seventh is that in which a relation is said to make a difference in its terms. A relation is internal "in this sense if it is such that both of the terms could not have been what they are without the relation holding between them".\* In the eighth sense in question, a relation is internal if it is such that from "a knowledge of one term and the relation in which it stands to the other term", the second term may be inferred to possess necessarily a certain characteristic "other than the characteristic of standing in the relations in question".† A relation R is internal in the ninth sense "when A could not exist unless B existed and was related to it by R".‡ And a term that is not only causally but logically dependent on its relation to the other term and *vice versa* is related internally in Dr. Ewing's tenth sense.

It may be said that since, for Bradley, relations differentiate the qualitative character of their terms, no terms could be what they are had they been otherwise differentiated. Nor could A exist as the quality it is without its being differentiated from B by R. It is also the case that, for Bradley, any term is logically dependent for its qualitative character on the relations by which it is differentiated from all other terms. This can hardly mean, however, that Dr. Ewing's seventh, ninth and tenth senses are equivalent to Bradley's theory of relations. Though on that theory no quality could

\* *Ibid.*, p. 131.

† *Ibid.*, p. 135.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-6.

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be or exist as the quality it is were its relations different in any respect, and though this dependence of quality on relation and *vice versa* is logical in being the nature of implication (as opposed to "linear inference"), this is so because relations contribute to constitute the identity of their qualities. Thus the internality of relations in Bradley's sense requires that relations be viewed as the moments of differentiation in a process wherein the identity of each moment implies its difference from every other. This would be to assume a view of identity on which no single term or relation could be repeated unaltered in diverse contexts; a view of identity that nothing in Dr. Ewing's analysis of relations would seem even to suggest.

## CHAPTER II

# Space and Time

BRADLEY assures the reader of *Appearance and Reality* that once he has grasped the main argument of the chapter on relation and quality, "he will have little need to spend his time upon those which succeed it". For he will have seen that our experience, everywhere and always, is self-discrepant to some degree or other. Nevertheless, it may serve to illustrate the main conclusions of chapter III if we consider the ways in which Bradley finds that those conclusions about relation and quality are exhibited by his conception of space and time.

At the outset of his very brief chapter on that subject, Bradley explains: "The object of this chapter is far from being an attempt to discuss fully the nature of space or of time. It will content itself with stating our main justification for regarding them as appearance. It will explain why we deny that, in the character which they exhibit, they either have or belong to reality. I will show this first of space."<sup>30</sup> To that end, Bradley proceeds to show that space must be more than relational, and that space may be no more than relational, in nature.

This "puzzle", as Bradley calls it, he sets forth anti-thetically. (1) "Space is not a mere relation. For any space must consist of extended parts, and these parts clearly are spaces. So that, even if we could take our space as a collection it would be a collection of solids. The relation would join spaces which would not be mere relations. And hence the collection, if taken as a *mere* inter-relation, would not be space. We should be brought to the proposition that space



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is nothing but a relation of spaces. And this proposition contradicts itself.”<sup>31</sup> Space must be more than relation, for relations must have terms. And space must consist of extended parts. These will be homogeneous solids, not relations at all. Thus the relation in question, if it were the very nature of space, would relate spaces which are not mere relations. To take space as being no more than relational would be to take it as consisting of relations—and so of relations without terms. Once the terms related are taken into account, it is seen that space cannot consist of a relation of relations. For that relation would not relate spaces.

Therefore, space must be more than a relation. (2) “But space is nothing but a relation. For, in the first place, any space must consist of parts; and, if the parts are not spaces, the whole is not space. Take, then, in a space any parts. These, it is assumed, must be solid, but they are obviously extended. If extended, however, they will themselves consist of parts, and these again of further parts, and so on without end. A space, or a part of space, that really means to be solid, is a self-contradiction. Anything extended is a collection, a relation of extendeds, which again are relations of extendeds, and so on indefinitely. The terms are essential to the relation, and the terms do not exist. Searching without end, we never find anything more than relations, and we see that we cannot. Space is essentially a relation of what vanishes into relations, which seek in vain for their terms. It is lengths of lengths of—nothing that we can find.”

“And, from the outside again, a like conclusion is forced on us. We have seen that space vanishes internally into relations between units which never can exist. But, on the other side, when taken itself as a unit, it passes away into the search for an illusory whole. It is essentially the reference of itself to something else, a process of endless passing beyond actuality. As a whole it *is*, briefly, the relation of itself to a non-existent other.”<sup>31, 32</sup> Space is no more than relational

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because space consists of parts and these parts consist of parts, and so on indefinitely. Thus space consists of the differences by which it is internally divided without limit. The notion that space consists of extended parts is an illusion that springs from the assumption that the parts of space are solid. Rather, those parts consist of divisions that are themselves divisible indefinitely. Those divisions or differentiations are relations. That is why, "Searching without end, we never find anything more than relations; and we see that we cannot. Space is essentially a relation of what vanishes into relations, which seek in vain for their terms".<sup>32</sup> This is so because space is divided into parts that are divided into parts and so on without end. Thus space consists of divisions or differentiations, and they are relations. Hence we have it that space is no more than the relations that are the parts of which space consists.

And, when we attempt to understand space not as a matter of parts, but as a unit, we are brought to much the same conclusion. "We have seen that space vanishes internally into relations between units which never can exist."<sup>32</sup> Yet, as we attempt to consider space as a whole, we find that it cannot be one. For consider, either space itself has boundaries, or else it has none. On the first alternative, space has boundaries. They are its limits, and they differentiate it from all that is not space. These boundaries, then, relate space to whatever is different from space. Therefore, the non-spatial terms of those relations are not spatial, and so we have spatial relations that lack terms at one end. On the second alternative, space has no boundaries: it is not differentiated from anything else. On both alternatives, then, space is "the relation of itself to a non-existent other".<sup>32</sup> The whole of space with boundaries posited is differentiated by relations which, at one end, have no terms. Thus the posited boundaries fail to bound; for they carry with them no termini for the relations or differentiations which those boundaries

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would be were they possessed of terms. And the whole of space taken without boundaries obviously is not even a specious whole.

Thus we may see that "Space is not a mere relation". It is more than a matter of relations for the reason that space is extended as well as divided and therefore must consist of extended parts, not of mere divisions or relations. "But space is nothing but a relation." For the parts in question consist of parts, and so on indefinitely. As infinitely divided, space is an infinity of divisions or relations. Therefore, space is no more than relations. And these relations would be hopelessly self-discrepant; for they would be relations without terms.

With regard to time, Bradley thinks that "the reader who has followed the dilemma which was fatal to space, will not require much explanation. If you take time as a relation between units without duration, then the whole time has no duration, and is not time at all. But, if you give duration to the whole time, then at once the units themselves are found to possess it; and they thus cease to be units. Time in fact is before and after in one; and without this diversity it is not time. But these differences cannot be asserted of the unity; and, on the other hand and failing that, time is helplessly dissolved. Hence they are asserted under a relation. Before in relation to after is the character of time; and here the old difficulties about relation and quality recommence. The relation is not a unity, and yet the terms are nonentities, if left apart. Again, to import an independent character into the terms is to make each somehow in itself both before and after. But this brings on a process which dissipates the terms into relations, which, in the end, end in nothing."<sup>33, 34</sup> Time, like space, is at once "a relation—and, on the other side, it is not a relation; and it is, again, incapable of being anything beyond a relation".<sup>33</sup> Time as a relation has to be a relation between terms of some sort.

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If these terms have no duration, then the whole time has no duration, and hence it is timeless. If, on the contrary, the terms have duration, then they cease to be distinct moments, for they are all contemporaneous with their duration. In order that they may remain distinct, they must be before and after each other. Without that inner asymmetrical diversity a duration is not temporal. Hence time is a relation—the relation of before and after. Yet these differences in before and after cannot be asserted of a single duration without thereby denying its unity. Therefore, time cannot be a relation. Nevertheless, if those differences are not asserted of that unity, the duration in question remains timeless. Hence time can only be the relation of before and after by virtue of which a duration is temporal. Thus we see that, despite the dilemma whose horns were touched upon just above, time “is, again, incapable of being anything beyond a relation.”<sup>33</sup>

The relation of before and after is the nature of time; “and here the old difficulties about relation and quality recommence.”<sup>34</sup> Without their diverse relations the diverse moments would not be differentiated, and so would not be before and after each other. Yet, with their diverse relations, each moment is infected with self-discrepancy. For each moment, as it stands before and after other moments, is a “now”. Within each now either there is no process, or there is process.

On the first alternative, a now would not be a moment of duration in process. On the second alternative, the presumed integrity of the now is destroyed from within. “Before and after are diverse, and their incompatibility compels us to use a relation between them. Then at once the old wearisome game is played again. The aspects become parts, the ‘now’ consists of ‘nows’, and in the end these ‘nows’ prove undiscoverable. For as a solid part of time, the ‘now’ does not exist.” Midday is after morning and before after-

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noon. But in this process there is no self-sustaining point at which a final line may be drawn between before and after. No matter how broadly that process be measured, or how minutely, the unit of process measured will contain within itself processes, and these will be before and after one another. "Pieces of duration may to us appear not to be composite; but a very little reflection lays bare their inherent fraudulence. If they are not duration, they do not contain an after and before, and they have, by themselves, no beginning or end, and are by themselves outside of time."<sup>35</sup> Moments of duration are themselves in process of becoming; they contain within themselves not barren simplicity but processes, which are likewise durations that are before and after one another.

To deny this is tantamount to affirming that the moments of duration you started with have no beginning and no end, no before and no after. But without beginning or end, these moments would fall outside of time. And, "if so, time becomes merely the relation between them; and duration is a number of relations of the timeless, themselves also, I suppose, related so as to make one duration. But how a relation is to be a unity, of which these differences are predicable, we have seen is incomprehensible. And, if it fails to be a unity, time is forthwith dissolved. But why should I weary the reader by developing in detail the impossible consequences of either alternative?"<sup>35</sup> A relation cannot be a unity of any sort, for, as we have seen, a relation is any aspect of differentiation in a process. This aspect is no static, vacuous being; a differentiation is itself in process, and so contains within itself differentiations and the moments of relative immediacy, or quality, which they differentiate or relate. Yet if the relation which allegedly relates the timeless units fails to effect somehow a unity among them, we are left with the notion of a time that would consist of timeless terms without relations. Any such "time" would consist of "timeless moments" that were not even differentiated, but simply one.

## CHAPTER III

# The General Nature of Reality

IN the course of the several remaining chapters of Book I, Bradley illustrates his conclusion that "a relational way of thought . . . is a makeshift, a device, a mere practical compromise, most necessary, but in the end most indefensible".<sup>28</sup> The contradiction or contrariety essential to the relational situation is likewise found in space and time, motion and change, causation, activity, and the self. Nowhere in appearance do we find a relational situation, whatever its character, that is altogether self-coherent. "The result of our First Book has been mainly negative. We have taken up a number of ways of regarding reality, and we have found that they all are vitiated by self-discrepancy."<sup>119</sup> Yet this very negation requires a positive ground; and it is to a consideration of this that Bradley turns in the opening chapters of Book II.

When you condemn the self-discrepant as appearance, and hold that appearance is not absolute reality, either you have some notion or other, however dim and vague, of what you mean by the reality which you say the self-discrepant is not, or else your condemnation of appearance as being not reality is groundless. For, on the second alternative, you have not the least notion of what it is that you say appearance is not.

Even so, it may be rejoined, surely the ultimacy of the relational and self-discrepant must be suspect, whether or not a man be cognizant of the grounds of that suspicion.

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And no less surely, about reality in itself, the sensible man can be only agnostic. "To know the truth, we shall be told, is impossible, or is, at all events, wholly impracticable. We cannot have positive knowledge about first principles; and, if we could possess it, we should not know when actually we had got it. What is denied is, in short, the existence of a criterion."<sup>119</sup> Yet, with no criterion of reality, how can you deny that anything, however incoherent, is real?

Bradley insists there can be but one answer to this question: in condemning the inconsistent as appearance, we are contrasting all this with what is not inconsistent; and this, the self-consistent, is ultimate reality. "Our standard denies inconsistency, and therefore asserts consistency. If we can be sure that the inconsistent is unreal, we must, logically, be just as sure that the reality is consistent. The question is solely as to the meaning to be given to consistency."<sup>119</sup> If, by definition, the inconsistent is unreal, then by the contradictory (or contrary) of the same definition the self-consistent is real. A denial of the conclusion of this immediate inference would deny the definition from which it follows.

Still, it may be objected, this is a barren conclusion. To know, if we do, that the ultimate nature of things excludes contradiction or contrariety is only to know that much; and this is not to know anything positive about absolute reality. "The denial of inconsistency, therefore, does not predicate any positive quality. But such an objection is untenable."<sup>122</sup> In his *Logic* (Vol. I, chapter III), to which Bradley here refers us, the reasons why such an objection as this one is not tenable are given at length.

In the negative judgment "A is not B" the negation may not be a merely external relation. Neither may the negation be said to affect only the copula: nor may it be said to belong only to the predicate. For then the judgment "A is not B" would read "A is not-B"; and we should be judging A to be qualified by not-Bness. In short, "negation presup-

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poses a positive ground".\* This ground will be that in virtue of which A is not, or excludes B. "Every negation must have a ground, and this ground is positive. It is that quality  $x$  in the subject which is incompatible with the suggested idea. A is not B because A is such that, if it were B, it would cease to be itself. . . . In other words, its quality  $x$  and B are discrepant. And we can not deny B without affirming in A the pre-existence of this disparate quality." Thus the redness of a rose here and now is incompatible with its being yellow. And that very determinate red would be the positive ground of the judgement "this rose is not yellow".

But more often than not, perhaps, this positive ground is not made explicit in the mind of the subject who makes the judgement. He might assume, and without thinking about it, that as an extended thing, the rose recognized at a distance has some colour or other, and so judge significantly, "that rose is not yellow"—whatever the perceived colour of it might turn out to be. Yet were a negative judgement without any such ground, however far to seek, or difficult to discriminate, it would be groundless altogether, and so not a judgement at all.

Thus, even though our objector should take it that Bradley's criterion here is fairly stated, "reality is not self-discrepant", still he must acknowledge that (on Bradley's theory of negation) this negative judgement requires a positive ground. And, at the very least, this ground can only be the self-consistency of the real. Even so, it may still be urged, "the criterion is a basis, which serves as the foundation of denial; but, since this basis cannot be exposed, we are but able to stand on it and unable to see it".<sup>122</sup> If, at this stage, more than a criterion of the nature of reality were in question, such an objection as this one might seem plausible: "and there is a sense in which I am prepared to

\* *Logic*, Vol. I, p. 114.

† *Ibid.*, p. 117.



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admit that it is valid".<sup>122</sup> The plausibility here would derive from the assumption that the criterion of reality, as opposed to appearance, is taken to be more than a criterion. As such it does indeed afford no detailed knowledge of reality. "But that is very far from being the point here at issue. For the objection denies that we have a standard which gives *any* positive knowledge, *any* information, complete or incomplete, about the genuine reality. And this denial assuredly is mistaken."<sup>122</sup> It is assuredly mistaken, because appearance is not blank nothing and is, therefore, in some sense real. The real, we have found, is the self-consistent. And so we know "that everything, which appears, is somehow real in such a way as to be self-consistent. The character of the real is to possess everything phenomenal in a harmonious form".<sup>123</sup> How this may be so, it is the burden of Bradley's theory of degrees of truth and reality to explain in some detail.

To find that no relational situation is wholly self-consistent is not to find that any situation is entirely or absolutely incoherent. For the absolutely incoherent would be not a unitary situation at all, but rather a mere aggregation of items. These items would be other than each other; and, by hypothesis, each one would be incompatible with, and so would exclude, every other one. Such a process would be not a process at all, but a fixed set of incompatibles.

The internality of relations rules out any plurality of reals as merely other than each other. "Otherness" would be the name of what (in his essay on *Relations*) Bradley calls a "merely external relation". For it would in no wise differentiate its intrinsically diverse terms. Such terms, intrinsically other than each other, would be what they were respectively in virtue of themselves alone. They would be self-identical, and therefore changeless. For that reason alone, such terms would be, at best, the merest abstractions from process.

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That there may be different qualities in appearance, there must be distinct differentiations by which those distinct moments of immediacy in process are differentiated. The character of any and every quality requires the differentiations in virtue of which the quality is what it is. This is to say that "identity implies difference". Since identity everywhere and always implies difference, this oft-quoted dictum may not be taken in a restricted sense. Were there some qualities, X, Y, Z, whose identity were not relational but intrinsic, their being different likewise would be intrinsic to those qualities themselves. This difference would be what Bradley calls a "merely internal" relation. Such a relation would be not a connection or differentiation at all; for an intrinsic difference could be nothing distinct from the intrinsically different terms themselves. And terms that were intrinsically individuated, or differentiated, would be self-identical and so changeless. A relation, to be a differentiation at all, and not a merely internal relation, must be distinguishable from its terms.\*

But more than this: were the identity of X, Y, and Z not relational but intrinsic, those terms would be absolute, each one in its own right. No one of them would be related with those terms whose identity is not absolute, but relational. And so X, Y, and Z would stand in a merely external relation to those terms whose identity implies their respective difference from all else. But any such externality is ruled out by Bradley's elucidation in the Chapter on *Relation and Quality* of how it is that differentiations in process are

\* What is the difference between a merely internal and merely external relation? Neither the one nor the other is a differentiation. Intrinsic difference is internal because any alteration in the terms *ipso facto* is an alteration in their intrinsic difference: and that difference is merely internal because it is intrinsic. Such is not the case with a merely external relation. If the otherness of a hue and a figure be taken to be relation, then as a merely external relation it does not relate them. And so there could be nothing in that merely external relation to be altered by an alteration in the hue or the figure.

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internal to the qualities thus differentiated. The internality of relations holds not at all, or it holds everywhere and always. To object that it holds not at all, is to invite oneself to expose as fallacious the dialectic by which Bradley finds the internality of relations to be the outcome of his initial elucidation of appearance in process.

The quality A is A, not in virtue of its difference from *some* other qualities and relation, but in virtue of its difference from *all* else. And A is *any* quality: where and whenever a moment of immediacy is differentiated there will be a quality whose character is what it is in virtue of its difference from all else. Thus, by its differentiations from all that is not itself, any quality is related with the indefinite variety of appearances from which it differs. And any attempt to maintain the reality of relations as merely external must fail. "For if, wrongly and for argument's sake, we admit processes and arrangements which do not qualify their terms, yet such arrangements, if admitted, are at any rate not ultimate."<sup>125</sup> For nothing short of the whole system of internally related qualities, and internally qualified relations, can be ultimate. Anything less could be final in its own right only if it were absolute, and so external to the system of internal relations. But that this is not a real alternative, the dialectic of the internality of relations makes plain.

Whatever is distinct is different; and to be different is to be differentiated, and so we have relation at once. "Relations are unmeaning except within and on the basis of a substantial whole, and related terms, if made absolute, are forthwith destroyed."<sup>125</sup> For absolute terms would be non-relational, and therefore not differentiated, and so nothing at all. Thus identity implies difference, everywhere and always. Any case of appearance will be what it is in virtue of its differences from all else. Thus, by the consideration of any form of process, we are led at once to the conclu-

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sion that reality cannot be less than a systematic whole of qualities and relations. That absolute Reality is more than this, the essential (although relative) incoherence of the relational situation indicates: Reality is the absolutely self-consistent being within which the various degrees of incoherence in Appearance are resolved.

How, even in principle, this resolution of degrees of coherence into an absolute reality is made out by Bradley, is a topic to be dealt with in its proper place. "Our result so far is this. Everything phenomenal is somehow real; and the absolute must at least be as rich as the relative. And, further, the absolute is not many; there are no independent reals. The universe is one in this sense that its differences exist harmoniously within one whole, beyond which there is nothing. Hence the absolute is, so far, an individual and a system, but, if we stop here, it remains but formal and abstract." Can we then, the question is, say anything about the concrete nature of the system? Bradley answers that reality is sentient experience. For everywhere and always what we have is the felt content of consciousness. Any attempt to deny this, say by way of a distinction between the *experiencing* and the *experienced*, which held the "ing" and the "ed" to be not distinct merely, but independent, could only ignore the internality of relations.

The *Cogito* surely illustrates a truth; viz, the truth that no content of consciousness may deny its own reality. And the identity, or character, of *any* content implies its difference from all else. In virtue of the relations by which any content is differentiated continuously within the whole, any content will be continuous with the whole; and the whole thus will be continuous with any content. Anything other than the systematic whole of internal relations would stand in an external relation to that whole. Yet this something or other is but a verbal fraud. For, as standing out of all relation to the system of internal relations, there would be nothing

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by which it could be differentiated and made different and itself: such an "it" could be nothing at all.

The conclusion that the real is sentient experience follows from an acknowledgement of the fact of sentient experience in any form, and an understanding of Bradley's theory of relations. In his conclusion here, Bradley fears he "may be understood to endorse a common error. I may be taken first to divide the percipient subject from the universe; and then, resting on that subject, as on a thing actual by itself, I may be supposed to urge that it cannot transcend its own states. Such an argument would lead to impossible results, and would stand on a foundation of faulty abstraction. To set up the subject as real independently of the whole, and to make the whole into experience in the sense of an adjective of that subject, seems to me indefensible. And when I contend that reality must be sentient, my conclusion almost consists in the denial of this fundamental error. For if, seeking for reality, we go to experience, what we certainly do *not* find is a subject or an object, or indeed any other thing whatever, standing separate and on its own bottom. What we discover rather is a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which divisions do not exist. And this is the point on which I insist, and it is the very ground on which I stand, when I urge that reality is sentient experience".<sup>128</sup> That there must be distinctions, and that there may be no separations, follows from the doctrine of relations that is elucidated in the course of chapters II and III of *Appearance and Reality*. Appearance, whatever its form, is systematic: there are to be found, and may be, no isolated and self-contained appearances existing out of relation with the systematic whole of internal relations. The real is sentient experience, not because reality is the adjective of a self-identical finite subject, but rather because there is sentient experience, and because anything other than or merely external to it, the internality of relations rules out. It may be that solipsism is implied by any subjective

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Idealism: certainly it is impossible within Bradley's metaphysics. For no finite centre of experience may be absolute: it is what it is in virtue of its relations with all else. Any attempt to posit a self that is a finite individual alone and in its own right can only ignore the theory of relations in virtue of which there is but *one* individual that is Absolute.

The dialectic or elucidation of relation and quality leads to a monism at once. A "some-what" that were not differentiated from all else could be nothing at all. And once differentiated from all else, any content whatever will be related with all that is not that relational content. The character of the content of reality may not be other than sentient experience. For the reality of sentient experience may not be denied. And anything other than sentient experience would be the verbiage of a term standing in a merely external relation.

Bradley is well aware that the concrete nature of reality is thus hardly more than indicated, and not made out.<sup>146</sup> Yet a conclusion about the general nature of reality has been reached. "Our conclusion, so far, will be this, that the absolute is one system, and that its contents are nothing but sentient experience. It will hence be a single and all-inclusive experience, which embraces every partial diversity in concord. For it cannot be less than appearance, and hence no feeling or thought, of any kind, can fall outside its limits. And if it is more than any feeling or thought which we know, it must still remain more of the same nature. It cannot pass into another region beyond what falls under the general head of sentience. For to assert that possibility would be in the end to use words without a meaning. We can entertain no such suggestion except as self-contradictory and as therefore impossible."<sup>129</sup> We may reject this conclusion, I submit, only if we reject Bradley's dialectic of relation and quality. And to that elucidation of the contraries which constitute process, any alternative on which relations and

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their terms respectively are intrinsically self-identical, and so absolute, each one in its own right, is of no avail. For such self-identical terms and relations may not become. Hence, to adopt any such alternative would be to deny not only Bradley's dialectic of relation and quality, but also, and altogether, the very possibility of becoming itself.

That, it may be urged, is what ought to have been done in the first place. It is an old story that what is called becoming is unintelligible, and an error to suppose that any case of development exists. Hume, for example, was a sensible man: he considered what we actually have in appearance; viz. succession: not development, or becoming. And if he did little or nothing toward elucidating the nature of succession, still that is not difficult to do in terms of the substitution of items in a compact series.

This hearty optimism would not be easy to uphold under criticism. For in a case of succession such as A, and then B, and then C, where is the *successiveness* to be found? By hypothesis, A and B and C are respectively self-identical and therefore changeless. Evidently, then, the succession of A, B, C is not to be found either *in* A or in B or in C. The change in virtue of which B is substituted for A, and C for B, may not exist within those items themselves. Where then does it exist? And what is its nature? To these questions our optimism affords no answer. And if, consistently with the self-identity of each one of the successive items, we try to think of the change in virtue of which they are successive as self-identical, we are faced with a flat impossibility. A self-identical change could only be changeless; and a changeless change is a contradiction in terms.

The change, in virtue of which successive items succeed one another, can hardly be a self-identical nature or form of any sort. And since no change may be self-identical, no change may be the contradictory of, or merely other than,

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any different change. Thus but one logical alternative remains: we must seek to elucidate the nature of process, not by any method for which identity is absolute, but rather by a dialectic of contraries. This allows us to notice that the identity of any moment of process is not absolute but relational. The quality A is not moment B in any sense in which the "not" here would be the sign of pure negation. Rather, the quality A is a contrary of moment B; and one middle term which falls between A and B is C. By this middle term they are differentiated; but not by it alone. And, since there is nowhere pure negation, this differentiation will be not external to, or other than its qualities: rather it will contribute to constitute their character, and so be internal to them. The respective identities of A and B imply that very differentiation, as the identity of that differentiation implies those qualities. And the conclusion that identity is relational—that identity implies difference—holds without exception. For the identity of any exception would not be relational but absolute. And for that reason, any alleged exception to the conclusion that identity implies difference could have no existence in process. The identity of A implies its difference from all else; and so at once we have a systematic whole of internal relations.

The use of the term implication in this context does not introduce a new factor into the dialectic of relations. No case of systematic implication (as distinguished from "linear inference", and from the implication which "linear inference" requires that it may be *a priori*) is anything distinct from the relational situation which is that implication. To say that qualities imply relations, and that relations imply qualities, means that qualities are internal to their differentiations, which are internal to those qualities. And this means that the quality contributes to constitute the differentiation, and the differentiation the quality: where the phrase "contributes to constitute" designates nothing in the



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relational situation distinct from the moments of immediacy and mediation which are the process itself.

The absolute to which this relational process leads we may know not concretely and in detail, but rather in abstract terms; and in a certain intimation of its character which our experience affords us. And our position here is ineluctable. So long as the relational way of thought is ours, then no matter to what level of concreteness we may attain, still we fall short of the Absolute. In order to know the Absolute, we should have to *be* absolute, and so cease to be relational and finite and ourselves. "What is impossible is to construct absolute life in its detail, to have the specific experience in which it consists. But to gain an idea of its main features—an idea true so far as it goes, though abstract and incomplete—is a different endeavour. And it is a task, so far as I see, in which we may succeed. For these main features, to some extent, are within our own experience; and again the idea of their combination is, in the abstract, quite intelligible. And surely no more than this is wanted for a knowledge of the Absolute. It is knowledge which of course differs enormously from the fact. But it is true, for all that, while it respects its own limits; and it seems fully attainable by the finite intellect."<sup>140</sup> The source of this imperfect knowledge is two-fold: on the one hand, there is "mere feeling or immediate presentation",<sup>140, 141</sup> on the other, there is the relational character of process, which "implies a substantial totality beyond relations and above them, a whole endeavouring without success to realize itself in their detail".<sup>140</sup> How it is that these two aspects of the matter may be taken together as affording an intimation of the character of the Absolute is a question to which we may now turn.

In immediate presentation we have what Bradley calls "the This and the Mine". For in the moment of immediacy that is quality, there is an immediacy of feeling in virtue of which the quality is *this* moment, and *mine*. "The 'this' and

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the 'mine' are names which stand for the immediacy of feeling, and each serves to call attention to one side of that fact. There is no 'mine' which is not 'this', nor any 'this' which fails, in a sense, to be 'mine'. " <sup>197</sup>

Any experience, in being *mine*, will be also *this* experience. And the "this" has a quite general referent: for, as so used, the term refers to the immediacy of feeling with which any moment of experience will be suffused. This immediacy of feeling "brings a sense of superior reality, a sense which is far from being wholly deceptive and untrue. For all our knowledge, in the first place, arises from the 'this'. It is the one source of our experience, and every element of the world must submit to pass through it. And the 'this', secondly, has a genuine feature of ultimate reality. With however great imperfection and inconsistency it owns an individual character. The 'this' is real for us in a sense in which nothing else is real."<sup>198</sup> Any moment of process will be this moment, so that any knowledge we may have will "arise from the this". Again, any moment of process will be internally related with my finite centre and thus, in that sense, any "this will also be mine".

It is in Bradley's explanation of his second point here that we have an account of the sense in which the "this" affords us some intimation of the character of the Absolute. Ultimate reality is not self-transcendent; for it is not relational. The Absolute, that is to say, is self-identical: it is not mediated, or in process in any sense of the term. Now "the 'this' possesses to some extent the same wholeness of character. Both the 'this' and reality, we may say, are immediate". Yet whereas the Absolute is above relations and wholly self-identical, the this is immediate "because it is at a level below distinctions",<sup>198, 199</sup> and not absolutely immediate. For the "this" is the aspect of indiscriminating feeling (which is the felt immediacy of any moment of sentient process. As indiscriminating, such feeling exhibits no differentiations

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within itself; it is almost mere sentience; it is the freshness or the apathy or the dullness or the vivacity, and so on, of an experience. Yet the "this", though it be the indiscriminating feeling tone of any experience, is not itself indiscriminated. And in being discriminated, however slightly, the this is differentiated, and so it is relational.

Again, if within the immediate feeling that is a this there be a tendency toward discrimination, and so toward internal differentiation, still such a "this" remains below the level of fully explicit differentiation. As thus at a level in process below that of explicit distinctions, the "this" is such that "Its elements are but conjoined, and are not connected. And its content, hence, is unstable, and essentially tends to disruption, and by its own nature must pass beyond the being of the 'this'. But every 'this' still shows a passing aspect of undivided singleness. In the mental background specially such a fused unity remains a constant factor, and can never be dissipated."<sup>199</sup> Although the "this" is never absolutely stable, and tends to pass over into differentiation, still at the same time no "this" fails to present a momentary aspect of undivided unity. And it is in this momentary phase of undifferentiated unity which any moment of experience, no matter how elaborate, will bear with it, that we have our intimation of the character of the absolute whole. That is why "The 'this' is real for us in a sense in which nothing else is real".<sup>198</sup> For the "this", though never absolutely stable, and still relational in virtue of its differentiations from all else, is more nearly absolute in its identity than is anything else to be found in process.

Yet if we take the "this" less narrowly, and in something of its context, we find that the phase of passing unity, which is its content, may be but fugitive. For "this" excludes "that"; and this exclusion may not be an external relation. Hence we see that the "this", taken negatively or as excluding a "that", is relational and therefore not ultimate. But if

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we take the "this" quite narrowly and as no more than a bare moment of immediacy, then the "this" excludes nothing and is merely positive. "We have found that the 'this', taken as exclusive, proclaims itself relative, and in that relation forfeits independence. And we have seen that, as positive, the 'this' is not exclusive at all. The 'this' is inconsistent always, but so far as it excludes, so far already has it begun internally to suffer dissipation."<sup>203</sup> The "this" is always inconsistent because, like any other quality in process, it is at once immediate and self-transcendent: yet taken as it occurs in process, and so with its differentiations, the "this" is relational. Again, as sheer immediacy, the "this", Bradley holds, is without content. For content implies distinction;<sup>203</sup> and, within utter immediacy, there are no distinctions at all.

Even so, it may be urged, the "this" is surely something more than the content of a moment of process. For any such content may be *this* content and *mine*; so that there is no specific content that is proper and peculiar to the "this" and the "mine". "In the 'this' . . . there is something more than content. For by combining qualities indefinitely we seem unable to arrive at the 'this'. The same difficulty may be stated perhaps in a way which points to its solution. The 'this' on one hand, we may say, is nothing at all beside content, and on the other hand the 'this' is not content at all. For in the term 'content' there lies an ambiguity. It may mean a what that is, or again is not, distinct from its 'that'. And the 'this', we have already seen, has inconsistent aspects. It offers, from one aspect, an immediate undivided experience, a whole in which 'that' and 'what' are felt as one. And here content, as implying distinction, will be absent from the 'this'."<sup>203</sup> Within a whole devoid of distinctions, plainly there may be no distinct content that might be proper and peculiar to the "this". Thus, in an immediate undivided experience there will be a passing aspect of singleness, in virtue of the undifferentiated charac-

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ter of the immediacy thus presented. Within this undivided aspect there are no distinctions; for it is internally undifferentiated, the bare immediacy in question exhibits no differentiations within itself; and so it offers no distinct content which might belong to the "this". Yet any such utter immediacy may be *this* immediacy and *mine*; and so we notice that the "this" designates no content proper and peculiar to itself. "If, on the other hand, we use content generally, and if we employ it in the sense of 'what' without distinction from 'that'—if we take it to mean something which is experienced—then, most emphatically the 'this' is not anything but content."<sup>203</sup> In this content, taken as in no wise transcending itself, there will be no distinction between *what* the content is and the fact *that* the content is this somewhat. So taken, this content will be immediate. In the sense that *this* content, so taken, is in no wise distinct from *this* same content, the "this" is nothing other than content.

In short, there is no sense of the term "this" in which it designates a content proper and peculiar to itself. If *this* content be taken in point of its immediacy, then there are to be found within that immediacy no distinctions whatever. And this is to say that the content, so taken, exhibits nothing that could be proper and peculiar to the "this", other than the single content itself. Yet we have noticed that any content may be *this* content, and that *this* content may be any content. There is, and could be, no content which would be the proper and peculiar referent of the term "this". "If we are asked what content is appropriated by the 'this', we may reply that there is none. There is no inalienable/content which belongs to the 'this' or the 'mine'."<sup>206</sup> The term "this" is not the proper name of any quality or relation. It has no proper and peculiar connotation of its own. And in every case of its use, the significance of the term "this" derives from the connotation of its context. The context will describe a content, and will describe it as being—partially, at least—

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immediate. In so far, then, as the context conveys the felt immediacy of the content, the "this" is significant of that immediacy. Yet, since such a content in its felt immediacy may be *any* content, there is no inalienable content which belongs to the "this" or the "mine". No content is proper and peculiar to the "this", simply because any content may be *this* content. "We have found that, in a sense, the 'this' is not, and does not own, content. But, in another sense, we have seen that it contains, and is, nothing else."<sup>206</sup> If it be undeniable that the referent of the term "this" may be no matter what, then the referent of the term "this" may not be something distinct from any content; something which as distinct, would belong only to the "this"; and so the referent of the term "this" is nothing else than content, or just any content in its felt immediacy.

Were the "this" and the "mine" not exclusive of the "that" and the "yours", it might be urged that they are real in isolation from all else. To be sure Bradley writes of the "this" and the "mine" as being below the level of relations. But to be below the level of distinctions is not to be by that very fact unrelated altogether. Within the aspect of the "this" that is its bare immediacy, there are no distinctions, and, therefore, no relations. Yet the question, it may be urged, is how this aspect which, within itself, is below the level of relations, is related to the content of which it is a passing aspect? And the answer here could only be that it is by virtue of the difference of this aspect from the rest of the content that the aspect is related to or continuous with the content. For within itself the aspect is devoid of relations: so taken it is immediate, and thus different from what of the content is relational. And by virtue of that difference, the passing aspect of immediacy is continuous with its content.

Moreover, to point out that the "this" is below the level of relations is not to say that the "this" is relationless. "An

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immediate experience, viewed as positive, is so far not exclusive. It is, so far, what it is, and it does not repel anything. But the 'this' certainly is used also with a negative bearing. It may mean 'this one', in distinction from that one and the other one. And here it shows obviously an exclusive/aspect, and it implies an external and negative relation." But every such relation, we have found, is inconsistent with itself (chapter III). For it exists within, and by virtue of an embracing unity, and apart from that totality both itself and its terms would be nothing. And the relation also must penetrate the inner being of its terms. " 'This', in other words, would *not* exclude 'that', unless in the exclusion 'this', so far, passed out of itself. Its repulsion of others is thus incompatible with self-contained singleness, and involves subordination to an including whole. But to the ultimate whole nothing can be opposed, or even related."<sup>201</sup> The contrariety in all process is presented in its most immediate and crucial form in the "this" and the "mine". As positive, the "this" is unmediated within itself. Yet, that it may be "this" rather than "that", a "this" must be different from a "that". By virtue of that difference a "this" will transcend itself. And that self-transcendence, which is the very process of becoming, is not consistent with the positive immediacy of the "this". For as positive, "It is, so far, what it is, and it does not repel anything."<sup>201</sup> Yet any "this", while it is immediate, is also relational; it is at once both itself and self-transcendent in virtue of the very differentiation by which its immediacy is *this* immediacy and not *that* one. Thus we may come to see that even immediate experience is related within the systematic whole of sentience that is the content of Reality, and of whose Absolute immediacy the "this" affords us an intimation.

The other source of our knowledge of the absolute, which Bradley mentions, is that of the relational character of experience. "And, again, the relational form, as we saw,

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pointed everywhere to a unity. It implies a substantial totality beyond relations and above them, a whole endeavouring without success to realize itself in their detail."<sup>141</sup> The sense, if any, in which the internality of relations may imply a whole that would be different from, and over and above, the system of internally related qualities itself, remains to be seen. Yet, whether or not the internality of qualities and relations leads to an Absolute whose identity is not relational, it does supply the nexus in virtue of which we may know that the relational way of thought, though it be never more than an ineluctable compromise, is always thinking what is *some* degree or other of reality.



## CHAPTER IV

# The Internality of Thought and Reality

AT the outset of his elucidation of how thought and reality are related, Bradley distinguished between the "what" and the "that"; and this distinction is fundamental for his theory of how it is that we know the real. "If we take up anything considered real, no matter what it is, we find in it two aspects. . . . There is a 'what' and a 'that', an existence and a content, and the two are inseparable."<sup>143</sup> We can say of anything we choose to consider both *that* it is and *what* it is; where the "that" marks the existence of the *what*, and the "what" refers to the quality or character of that existent. These two aspects of anything are distinct and distinguishable, but they are not separate or separable. A bare existent: one that were without a character or content of any sort: would *be* nothing at all. Again, a content that were without character of any sort would *be* nothing at all. Again, a content that were not *that* content, or *this* content, would be nothing distinct from anything else, and so it would be nothing at all.

Yet, in the process of thinking, a "what" will be differentiated from its "that". "For thought is clearly, to some extent at least, ideal. Without an idea there is no thinking, and an idea implies the separation of content from existence. It is a what which, so far as it is a mere idea, clearly *is* not, and if it also *were*, could, so far, not be called ideal. For ideality lies in the disjoining of quality from being."<sup>142, 143</sup> This tells us what Bradley means by the "ideality of the finite".

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Thinking is ideal in that the content of thought will be a "what" partially prescinded from its "that". This abstraction may in no case be more than partial. For if a what were wholly abstract and quite independent of any context of relations whatever, it would be differentiated by nothing, and so "it" would be nothing at all. "If we try to get the 'what' by itself, we find at once that it is not all. It points to something beyond and cannot exist by itself and as a bare adjective. Neither of these aspects, if you isolate it, can be taken as real, or indeed in that case is itself any longer. They are distinguishable only and are not divisible."<sup>142</sup> As we abstract, we progressively alter the relations in which the content initially stood. A "what" which were quite prescinded from its "that" would be a content cut off from all relations. Any such what would be a "floating idea"; a something that were external to the internality of relations. We have seen above the reasons why nothing real may be external to all relations. Without relations, "it" would not be differentiated from anything and so "it" would be nothing at all. The "what" and the "that" are distinguishable, not separable.

Bradley warns us against the error of taking it that the ideal may be mere psychical fact, such as an image or a sense-perception. Since the ideal consists of a "what" which is partially transcending its "that," "the common view which identifies image and idea is fundamentally in error. For an image is a fact, just as real as any sensation; it is merely a fact of another kind and it is not one whit more ideal. But an idea is any part of the content of a fact, so far as that works out of immediate unity with its existence. And an idea's factual existence may consist in a sensation or perception, just as in an image. The main point and the essence is that some features in the 'what' of a given fact should be alienated from its 'that' so far as to work beyond it, or at all events loose from it. Such a movement is ideality, and, where it is

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absent, there is nothing ideal.”<sup>144</sup> The psychical fact that is an image of imagination, is a fact which is no more ideal than is the psychical fact that is a sense perception. It is in the movement by which moments of sentience are in processes of differentiation, or self-transcendence, that ideality consists. The ideality of the finite, or the partial transcendence of a “that” by its “what”, is in no respect different from the process of the internality of relations.

We have noticed that the “what”, or the character of a quality, inevitably transcends itself in and through the very differentiation, or relation, by virtue of which it is *that* quality, and not a different one. Likewise, any differentiation, or relation, will transcend itself in so far as what falls between the qualities thus differentiated is internal to, or in and of the terms thus related by that “what”. This movement of self-transcendence is everywhere the nature of process. In the “this” and the “mine” self-transcendence is but incipient, to be sure; yet, as we noticed above, it is there present. And in explicit thinking the ideality of the content is realized to a discriminable degree. This ideality of the finite is the very same as the self-transcendence of moments of process or Appearance. This self-transcendence of content arises by virtue of the incessant internal differentiation, or relation of moments of Appearance.

In the moment of differentiation that is thought, as distinguished from judgement, we have no more than the partial transcendence of a “that” by its “what”, without the consummation of the reference of this “what” to a “that” which lies beyond the context from which that “what” is passing. With the consummation of that process, we have judgement, which is “thought in its completed form”. And in considering the nature of judgement, we may see more fully why it is that no psychical fact is an idea. “We can understand this most clearly if we consider the nature of judgement, for there we find thought in its com-

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pleted form. In judgement an idea is predicated of a reality. Now, in the first place, what is predicated is not a mental image. It is not a fact inside my head which the judgement wishes to attach to another fact outside. The predicate is a mere 'what', a mere feature of content, which is used to qualify further the 'that' of the subject. And this predicate is divorced from its psychical existence in my head, and is used without any regard to its being there. When I say 'this horse is a mammal', it is surely absurd to suppose that I am harnessing my mental state to the beast between the shafts. Judgement adds an adjective to reality, and this adjective is an idea, because it is a quality made loose from its own existence, and is working free from its implication with that. And, even when a fact is merely analysed—when the predicate appears not to go beyond its own subject, or to have been imported divorced from another fact outside—our account still holds good. For here obviously our synthesis is a re-union of the distinguished, and it implies a separation, which, though it is over-ridden, is never unmade. The predicate is a content which has been made loose from its own immediate existence and is used in divorce from that first unity."<sup>144</sup> In a judgement, the "what" which is its content, exists not in a stage of mere self-transcendence referring to a subject beyond itself. Rather, the "what" of a judgement exists as referred to a subject. This is to say that the moment of mediation or self-transcendence or relation that is thinking, is, in judgement, fully referred to the subject which, in and through that judgement, this thinking comes to qualify. Thus the initial partial estrangement of the "what" from its "that" is healed in the union of that "what" with the further psychical fact which is the proximate subject of the thought thus completed in judgement. "Judgement is essentially the re-union of two sides, 'what' and 'that', provisionally estranged. But it is the alienation of these aspects in which thought's ideality con-

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sists.”<sup>175</sup> In the re-union of “what” and “that,” however, the what need not be re-united with the very same psychical fact from which initially it was estranged. For the what may be referred to, and finally joined with, new psychical fact which would be quite different from the old.

Indeed, once it be considered that any case of the ideality of thought is a case of the self-transcendence that is of the essence of the internality of relations, it is then difficult to see how the reunion that is judgement could be a mere repetition of the psychical fact in which the content of the judgement had its origins. For the “what”, in passing beyond its “that”, is altering its context of relations. This is to say that the “relations”, by which the what is differentiated, are being altered. And in any alteration of its relations the “what” itself is being altered. Therefore, the “what” that is re-united in judgement may not be qualitatively identical with what it was at the inception of the moment of ideality; nor, for that matter, at any stage in the course of the passing of that moment of thinking over into the fulfilment of it in judgement. It would seem, then, that both the “what” which is re-united in judgement *and* the relational context of this consummation could only be different from the initial “what” and its “that”. Indeed, since identity implies qualitative as distinguished from numerical difference, a mere repetition of content would be impossible.

The sharpness of the contrast drawn by Bradley between the ideality of self-transcendence, and the comparative inanition of psychical fact, might suggest that most psychical fact is congealed sentience, barely alive. Worse still, the suggestion might be conveyed that the ideal is a light that never was on sea or land, except as a sort of aura diffused here and there on earth by precious minds. This sort of misunderstanding of the matter Bradley takes up as “a most important point”. “There exists a notion that ideality is something outside of facts, something imported into them,

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or imposed as a sort of layer above them; and we talk as if facts, when let alone, were in no sense ideal. But any such notion is illusory. For facts which are not ideal, and which show no looseness of content from existence, seem hardly actual. They would be found, if anywhere, in feelings without internal lapse, and with a content wholly single."<sup>146</sup> Within a content without internal lapse there would be no differentiations. Hence there would be within it no relations, no process of fission through which it would transcend itself. Any such content would be hardly actual; it would be this content and mine, but at a level of sentience almost below that of discrimination.

Nevertheless, and no matter how lethargic any such moment of sentience might be within itself, it would be *that* lethargic moment and different from all else. Although barely actual or definite, or hardly explicit, that content would differ from its relational context. To that extent it would be ideal. And any moment of sentience, however lethargic and smug, will be a different moment. Hence any content, even though it be almost devoid of differentiation within itself as immediacy or quality, still will be incipient with change. For it will be the quality it is by virtue of its relations. These will be neither lethargic nor smug, but actively alive. As those relations change, the content they differentiate will change also.

This much is true of any content or fact. That is why any fact, however subliminal and undifferentiated within the immediacy of it, nevertheless is in change and so in a reference beyond itself that is incipient at least.

Hence Bradley continues with the text quoted above as follows: "But if we keep to fact which is given, this changes in our hands, and it compels us to perceive inconsistency of content. And then this content cannot be referred merely to its given 'that', but is forced beyond it, and is made to qualify something outside. But, if so, in the simplest change

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we have at once ideality—the use of content in separation from its actual existence.”<sup>146</sup> There is ideality in the simplest change because any change in any content *ipso facto* is a change in the relations which differentiate it, and by which it transcends itself. The change that is this self-transcendence is ideal, for the ideality of the finite consists in the self-transcendence of psychical fact. And this transcendence consists in the process of relational becoming that is Appearance. Through that self-transcendence the content of a psychical fact comes to be referred beyond its “that”. “For the content of the given is for ever relative to something not given, and the nature of its ‘what’ is hence essentially to transcend its ‘that’. This we may call the ideality of the given finite. It is not manufactured by thought, but thought itself is its development and product. The essential nature of the finite is that everywhere, as it presents itself, its character should slide beyond the limits of its existence.”<sup>146</sup> Such is the character of the finite because everywhere and always the finite is relational and in process: it is Appearance. The ideality of the finite is anything but intellectual and factitious; rather it is the very nature of the incessant fission in sentience which issues in the self-transcendence of psychical fact that is thought. Hence the sense in which thought is thought, the sense in which thought is ideal, and the sense in which the internality of relations is in process, are all one and the same.

Having thus explained briefly the sense in which thought is properly said to be ideal, and how it is that thinking is completed in judgement, Bradley now proceeds to indicate what is for him the nature of truth. “Truth is the predication of such content as, when predicated, is harmonious, and removes inconsistency and with it unrest. And because the given reality is never consistent, thought is compelled to take the road of immediate expansion. If thought were successful, it would have a predicate consistent in itself and agreeing entirely with the subject. But, on the other hand,

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the predicate must be always ideal. It must, that is, be a 'what' not in unity with its own 'that', and therefore, in and by itself, devoid of existence. Hence, so far as in thought this alienation is not made good, thought can never be more than merely ideal." The truth attainable by thought, and attained in judgement, may not be absolute. Thought and judgement are ineluctably relational. A thought, that is, to be non-relational or absolute, would require "a predicate consistent in itself and agreeing entirely with the subject". Such a thought would be a tautology; for the predicate A would "agree entirely with," i.e. would repeat, the subject A. And such a thought would be intrinsically tautologous. For  $A_p$ , in being itself absolutely, would be intrinsically individuated; and thus would be true also of  $A_s$ . Therefore  $A_p$  and  $A_s$  would be no more than numerically, or enumerably, different from each other. Numerical difference would be a merely external relation, and any such notion is excluded by the internality of relations.

Thus thought may not choose to be tautological: it is ineluctably relational; which is to say that in thought "the predicate must be always ideal". What is predicated in a process of thinking may be only a "what" which is in the process of self-transcendence. This process of self-transcendence is the very process of predication which is completed in the re-union of the "what" with a new "that". Without this fact of self-transcendence, there would be no process in sentience—at most there would be only changeless states of feeling in succession. Indeed, within any such changeless sentience, there would hardly be even a plurality of states. For as changeless, sentience could not become differentiated at all, and so it would remain everywhere and always homogeneous and undifferentiated. No such sentience could give rise to so much as a vague question about itself, much less a thought, or a judgement. For in being altogether unmediated, such sentience could only be undifferentiated,



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or relationless, and hence mere psychical fact devoid of all thought.

In the absence of all becoming or self-transcendence, there could be no thinking, but only mere psychical fact. But change is an experience whose actuality can hardly be questioned. Where there is change at all there is differentiation and thus "inconsistency of content," or self-transcendence. And the "what" which thus is transcending its "that" "cannot be referred merely to its given 'that' but is forced beyond it, and is made to qualify something outside." And that is why it is that "in the simplest change we have ideality"; for within no matter what sort of change there will be differentiation, and we have noticed that in any quality or relation there is self-transcendence. Indeed, self-transcendence is but another name for the relational character of appearance. Qualities transcend themselves as qualities in so far as they are related: relations likewise transcend themselves as relations in so far as they contribute to constitute their qualities.

Yet, no matter how elaborate the origins of a thought, and no matter how comprehensive and self-consistent the resulting judgement may be, this judgement will fall short of absolute truth. "For the content of the given is for ever relative to something not given, and the nature of its 'what' is hence essentially to transcend its 'that'. This we may call the ideality of the finite. It is not manufactured by thought, but thought itself is its development and product. The essential nature of the finite is that everywhere, as it presents itself, its character should slide beyond the limits of its existence."<sup>146</sup> Even so, it may be asked, why is thought not able through the internality of relations to arrive at the positive nature of the Absolute? For the internality of relations is the very being in process of thought and of judgement. And to this the answer is again the same in principle.

Absolute knowledge of the Absolute would be either (1) a

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knowledge that were related to, and by virtue of that very relation, differentiated from the object known, or (2) this knowledge would be not relational at all, but rather identical with what thus would be known. On the first alternative the knowledge in question still would be relational and therefore not absolute knowledge. Moreover, were anything whatever held to be related to or with the Absolute, that Being itself would forthwith become relational, and thus it would cease to be Absolute.

On the second alternative, the knowledge in question would be one with its object. Such alleged knowledge would consist of a judgement in which the subject and the predicate were qualitatively identical. And this tautology would be the suicide of thought and judgement. "If there is no judgement, there is no thought; and if there is no difference, there is no judgement, nor any self-consciousness. But if, on the other hand, there is a difference, then the subject is beyond the predicated content." Were there no differences anywhere in sentience, there could be no self-consciousness and no thinking; for all would be one and homogeneous. And this differentiation which is the self-transcendence of process must be a difference between qualities: it may not be the mere numerical difference of two qualitatively identical items. For such items would be self-identical, and therefore changeless. The differentiation or self-transcendence which is the active nerve of thinking and judging must be qualitative. Consequently and inevitably in thought and in judgement there will be a difference between the subject of thinking and what is predicated of that subject in the completed judgement. An absolute, or non-relational, judgement is a tautology; and in the bare repetition of tautology we have the suicide of judgement.

In whatever form we may have sentience, it will be in becoming; differentiations will be breaking out within it, and the qualities thus emerging will be related by those very

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differentiations. Qualities as qualities, we have seen, are the moments of immediacy in sentient process. And relations are the moments of differentiation in that process. The self-transcendence of quality by relation is the ideality of thought and the content of judgement. It is because thought and judgement are thus essentially relational that, no matter how comprehensive and internally coherent a judgement may become, it can only fall short of being absolutely self-coherent. "Thought is relational and discursive, and, if it ceases to be this, it commits suicide; and yet, if it remains thus, how does it contain immediate presentation?"<sup>150</sup> The conclusion to which we are driven is that if, by "immediate presentation", we mean something absolute in its own right, then thought neither contains nor attains immediate presentation. The immediacy of the "this" and the "mine" is, we have noticed, at once immediate and relational, thus illustrating in an acute form the essential incoherence of any partial whole of quality and relation. Any whole in judgement, however elaborate and comparatively self-coherent, will still fall short of the absolutely self-coherent Individual. Yet, again it may be urged, "A harmonious system of content predicating itself, a subject self-conscious in that system of content, this is what thought should mean."<sup>150</sup> But this system would be simply the systematic whole of internal relations. For, since that whole would be sentience, it would be a systematic whole conscious of itself. Yet, here again, no advance has been made. What is conscious "of" the content of the systematic whole either is somehow different from that content, or it is not different from it. The first alternative gives us self-consciousness, but it gives it to us as the feeling of a systematic whole from which that feeling remains distinct; and, so far, excluded from that whole. The second alternative gives us no *self*-consciousness at all—no consciousness, that is to say, distinct from that of the systematic whole of sentience itself.

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Though any attempt to exhibit the positive character of the Absolute in and through thought be fore-doomed to failure by the essentially relational nature of judgement, still the theory of predication which Bradley presents in Note A affords another clue to the function of the Absolute in judgement, and so in Appearance itself. If, in thinking, we would have more than a mere association of ideas, there must be in some sense the assertion of "unity in diversity." Differences in no sense united are merely different; and, on the other hand, it is an old story that the formula of thought may not be "A is A". Yet the requirement that thought must unite differences is not an easy one to fulfil. If the formula for significant thinking may not be A is A, neither may it be A is Y. For here the predicate Y, being different from A, is not A. Since this would be to assert and to deny in the same thought, the process of uniting differences in judgement may not be expressed in the form "A is Y".

The alternative that, in thinking A is Y, we are really meaning "A has Y", is of no avail. For either "A has Y" means no more than "A is A and has Y", where the "has" expresses bare conjunction; or "A has Y" means that "A is-such-as-to-have Y". On the first alternative the connection of Y with A remains unexplained; on the second, the copula is again introduced, and the original dilemma remains. The one possible method of resolving this dilemma, Bradley concludes, is afforded by the notion of identity in difference. Judgements uniting differences are themselves adjectives of Reality, which is a systematic Whole. The absolute identity of this Whole is the ultimate identity in all differences. Hence, it is ultimately in virtue of this identity that A and Y are united in thought.

In the statement of a judgement the subject will be grammatically distinct from the predicate. But nothing in judgement itself corresponds to this grammatical distinction. For both of the terms which contribute to constitute a

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judgement are adjectival. This means that the subject and predicate terms are alike in qualifying a reality which lies beyond those constituents of the judgement itself. Nor may it be otherwise within the internality of relations. For the two terms in question will be related in virtue of their qualitative difference. Again, in virtue of their difference from their proximate subject—that to which they initially refer—they are related with that subject of their reference. And their reference, or their being referred to that proximate subject, will consist in the very differentiations by which those terms are related to that subject. Moreover, the respective identities of those terms imply their differences from, and so their relations to, all else. This is true also of the identity of the relational situation which is their proximate subject. Thus the ultimate subject of reality is the absolute identity of the systematic whole. It is to this, ultimately, that every judgement refers. Nor can there be any mystery as to the nature of that reference. For it is in virtue of the internality of the relations of its contents to all else, that the final subject of any judgement is ultimate Reality.

Thus we may see that on any view of the nature of relations that is cognate with that of Bradley, the question, what is the nature of the relation between thought and reality? would be a meaningless question. It would be meaningless because there is and could be no single or unique relation that were "*the* relation" between thought and reality. The object of thought is not in any sense independent of what is thought. With Bradley's dialectic of relations in mind, the internality of thought and reality will be plain enough. For the content of any judgement, in virtue of its difference from its proximate subject, is related with that subject. And the proximate subject, with that related content, likewise are related within and to the whole of the systematic whole that is Appearance.

## CHAPTER V

# The Coherence Theory of Truth and Reality

BRADLEY deals with the problem of error on his way to his theory of truth, and we shall examine his theory of error as a preface to the main topic of this chapter. "Error is without any question a dangerous subject, and the chief difficulty is as follows: We cannot, on the one hand, accept anything between non-existence and reality, while, on the other hand, error obstinately refuses to be either. It persistently attempts to maintain a third position, which appears nowhere to exist, and yet somehow is occupied. In false appearance there is something attributed to the real which does not belong to it. But if the appearance is not real, then it is not false appearance, because it is nothing. On the other hand, if it is false, it must therefore be true reality, for it is something which is. And this dilemma at first sight seems insoluble."<sup>164, 165</sup>

Error, it would seem, must be real in some sense: yet an error neither may belong to the Absolute, nor may it qualify, nor contribute to constitute any erroneous judgement; for all judgements are in and of the Real. Yet it is being erroneous that is the defining characteristic of the erroneous judgement. Thus it would seem that error both must be, and yet may not be real.

Accordingly, the two main questions with which Bradley is here concerned are (1) why error may not be real, and (2) the sense in which error is (as it must be) real.<sup>166</sup> Error "is at any rate one kind of false appearance. Now appearance is

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content not at one with its existence, a 'what' loosened from its 'that'."<sup>186</sup> And, "appearance will be truth when a content, made alien to its own being, is related to some fact which accepts its qualification. The true idea is appearance in respect of its own being as fact and event, but is reality in connection with other being which it qualifies."<sup>186</sup> As ideal, a true idea is an appearance in that the ideality of the finite is the process of self-transcendence that is Appearance. But a true idea, as a content of completed thinking or judgement, is real to the degree to which it coheres with the proximate subject that it qualifies. "Error, on the other hand, is content made loose from its own reality, and related to a reality with which it is discrepant. It is the rejection of an idea by existence which is not the existence of the idea as made loose. It is the repulse by a substantive of a liberated adjective."<sup>186</sup> And in a footnote to this passage, Bradley adds that "whether the adjective has been liberated from this substantive or from another makes no difference". An erroneous judgement will be one whose content is, to a degree, incoherent with the proximate subject to which that content is referred.

But this is not to be taken to mean that the content *qua* content is erroneous. To be sure, the identity of the content is relational, and so the content itself will illustrate the comparative incoherence of any relational reality. Yet this comparative incoherence is not error. Nor will error result before judgement is attempted and completed. For it is in the predication of a content which is not compatible with its proximate subject that error exists. Thus it is not the relational incoherence or self-discrepancy of the content itself that is error; rather it is the failure of the content predicated of the proximate subject to cohere (to any but a slight degree) with the subject it is judged to qualify.

The proximate subject, S, will be a certain relational situation. As such it will be a relational concretion having a

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certain character, which will be different from that of any other relational situation. Now predicate A, let us say, will be more fully coherent with the character of S than will predicate Z. This is to say that all the differentiations by which A is related with S are indefinitely more elaborate than are those by which Z is thus related. That being the case, the predication of A of S would result in a judgement whose content were elaborately relevant to, and therefore coherent with, the subject thus qualified. Such a judgement would be true to a high degree. If, on the contrary, predicate Z were predicated of S, then there would be but little coherence of that predicate with the subject of the judgement. To be sure Z could not be out of *all* relation to S; for nothing may be quite external to anything else. But Z has so little bearing on (i.e. so few, or such tenuous relations with) S, that the character of S repels Z when it is judged to qualify S with a relevance of which Z is not capable in that connection.

Lest the meaning of the term "relevance" here seem to be in need of a definition which, it may seem, could only be circular, it may be well to take up that point before going on. The term "relevant", it may be urged, is not definable without circularity; for any definition offered would have to be relevant. The force of this objection is specious, on Bradley's theory of appearance and reality.\* For the relevant is the internally related. All appearances are internally related: hence Bosanquet's dictum, "all is relevant to all". Nor does this bi-verbal definition beg the question. For by this definition the meaning of "relevance" is simply identified with that of the internality of relations; and (as is even obvious) the meaning of that doctrine is *not* thus called in question.

In an erroneous judgement, some content or other is

\* It is also specious on other grounds that need not be entered into in this connection.



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alleged to be relevant to a subject in respects in which that content is not thus relevant. "Suppose that when William has been hung, I assert that it was John. My assertion will then be false, because William is certain. And if so, then after all my error surely will consist in giving to the real a self-discrepant content. For otherwise, when John is suggested, I could not reject the idea."<sup>163</sup> Here the error lies in the discrepancy between the relevance of the living character of John and the nature of William's being hung. And taking the judgement as being completed in its alleged reference\* to its subject, this discrepancy between the adjective and substantive terms of the judgemental situation will be the self-discrepancy of the judgement, taken as the total situation. It is this discrepancy between asserted relevance, and the actual substantive situation, that is at once error in judgement and, seemingly, a flat inconsistency in monistic theory.

Turning to the "second main problem of the chapter",<sup>169</sup> that "about the relation of error to the Absolute",<sup>169</sup> Bradley gives the following statement of the matter to be explained: "There is no way but in accepting the whole mass of fact, and in then attempting to correct it and make it good. Error *is* truth, it is partial truth that is false only because partial and left incomplete. The Absolute *has* without subtraction all those qualities, and it has every arrangement which we seem to confer upon it by our mere mistake. The only mistake lies in our failure to give also the complement. The reality owns the discordance and the discrepancy of false appearance; but it possesses also much else in which this jarring character is swallowed up and is dissolved in fuller harmony. I do not mean that by a mere re-arrangement of the matter which is given to *us*, *we* could remove its contradictions. For, being limited, we cannot apprehend all the details of the whole. And we must remem-

\* Where the term "reference" means what is meant by "relevance".

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ber that every old arrangement, condemned as erroneous, itself forms part of that detail. To know all the elements of the universe, with all the conjunctions of those elements, good and bad, is impossible for finite minds. And hence obviously we are unable throughout to reconstruct our discrepancies. But we can comprehend in general what we cannot see exhibited in detail."<sup>169, 170</sup> The statement that "error is truth" may seem merely paradoxical; yet it expresses literally a part of Bradley's theory of error.

We have noticed how error arises. When a content, Z, is almost irrelevant to S, and yet is asserted to qualify S, then we have error. This error is not a nature or form that is distinct from the internally related content which is the adjective, and the relational situation which is the substantive, of the judgement. For the error will consist of the almost complete failure of the content Z to qualify S. And this failure is no nature or form of any sort. Rather it is almost complete irrelevance.

Now, any case of relevance will be some case or other of the internality of relations realized in a judgement. This judgement will be an appearance; and it will be real to the degree to which it is self-coherent. But irrelevance, taken as utter irrelevance, has no referent anywhere in appearance or reality. The utterly irrelevant would be the non-relevant. This verbiage would have no bearing (beyond that of its existence as a verbal construction) within the internality of relations, and so it would have no logical bearing (as distinguished from a merely verbal ontological standing) at all. Thus, in so far as the content of an erroneous judgement is logical or coherent with the subject of that judgement, to that extent the judgement is true. The rest of it is verbiage. For whatever of a judgement is not true is irrelevant, and what is irrelevant may have no referent within the realm of the internality of relations. Short of the very best that Rimbaud, Péguy, and Stein have produced, there will be

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no utter irrelevance, and so no absolute error. Failure in relevant qualification will usually be but partial: when utter meaninglessness is achieved, this will be utterly non-logical. Such achievements in the use of language, however, are very rare. Almost always the erroneous judgement will be more than irrelevant and merely verbal. However slightly, it will still qualify the real; and, to that degree, it will be, not the irrelevance that is mere error; rather, it will be true to a certain degree.

By the emendation of its content, an erroneous judgement may be made less erroneous, or more coherent with its subject, and so more true. Thus "error is truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete."<sup>169</sup> As the truth of a judgement becomes less partial, less incomplete, the content of the judgement will be more fully related to the subject. The judgement will be the more relevant, or the more true. It is in this failure to be relevant that error lies, and that failure is nothing positive: it is not in any sense a quality or a relation. "The only mistake lies in our failure to give also the complement."<sup>170</sup> For by any emendation of the original content of an erroneous judgement, the initial error is transcended. And by an emendation that were almost all-comprehensive, we would arrive at a judgement that were but slightly erroneous. But to accomplish so much as this would be practically impossible. "I do not mean that by a mere re-arrangement of the matter which is given to *us*, *we* could remove its contradictions."<sup>170</sup> Since our outlook is limited, we may not apprehend anything like all of the details of the systematic whole of internal relations. Moreover, as Bradley reminds us, we must not forget "that every old arrangement, condemned as erroneous, itself forms part of that detail." This brings us to the third and final one of the main topics of Bradley's chapter on error.

Up to this point, we have noticed that error lies in the

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conflict between the relevance (or the internal relations) of a content predicated of a subject, and the character of the subject which repels the predication of that content. We have noticed also that, *in so far as* error is a failure in relevance and so is irrelevance, error is nothing real. An erroneous judgement is significant, and a judgement at all, only in so far as it is true. And by a progressive emendation of an erroneous judgement, the initial coherence of it with the real may be deepened and widened. Thus, so far, it would seem that error is merely negative, or unreal. "But our account, it will fairly be objected, is untenable because incomplete. For error is *not* merely negative."<sup>172</sup> Because the content, predicated as thoroughly relevant, fails to fulfil the intended predication. This *failure* is nothing real, to be sure. But the *difference* between Z (the predicate which is mainly irrelevant to S) and A (the predicate which is almost fully relevant to the character of S) is a relation. And this relation (this difference between Z and A), like any other relation, is not unreal. It constitutes the reason why it must be admitted that error is not merely negative. For though irrelevance is verbiage, still the *difference* between the predicate of a judgement that is largely irrelevant, and any other content that is relevant to the subject of that judgement, is real.

Error is not a special sort of appearance; taken as a characteristic of some (and only some) judgements, error is unreal. Any judgement, in being less than wholly self-coherent, will be less than wholly true. Hence any judgement will be erroneous to a degree.

But if error is no peculiar disease, amenable to a logical *cordon sanitaire*, none the less any error is real. The reality of it consists of the relations that are the differences between the predicate predicated by a judgement that is erroneous and the quality of the subject that repels that predicate. Those relations are as real as any others. And they may be any

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relations whatever; not relations or differences of a peculiar sort.

The relations that constitute the reality of an error are of no special brand; the difference between those relations as they contribute to constitute that judgement, rather than any other, is a difference of degree. For the difference between a judgement that is erroneous and one that is true is a difference not of kind. Any judgement is at once true and erroneous. A judgement that is more comprehensively self-coherent than not, is properly called true. A judgement that is more fully self-discrepant than coherent, is properly called an error.

Far from being a peculiarity of some judgements only, error is of the nature of all judgements, to some degree or other. For a judgement is a relational situation, and the relational is everywhere and always self-discrepant: not absolutely, of course; that would be the blank of a pure negation; but self-discrepant to a degree.

Error, then, is all-pervasive in appearance; for the self-discrepant reality of error consists of the degrees of self-discrepancy that are the differentiations in the process of becoming. Thus, in reality error is not different *in kind* from truth. An error is a judgement that is more comprehensively self-discrepant—a judgement in which more contrarities break out between the proximate subject and the predicate—than our aspiration to self-coherence can tolerate.

And the reality of any error itself is self-discrepant because, taken as degrees of contrariety, errors are not self-sufficient. Our aspiration to the attainment of complete self-coherence makes us discriminate between degrees of self-discrepancy and self-coherence. "Error is truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete. The Absolute *has* without subtraction all those qualities, and it has every arrangement which we seem to confer upon it by our mere mistake. The only mistake lies

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in our failure to give also the complement. . . . I do not mean that by a mere re-arrangement of the matter which is given to *us*, *we* could remove its contradictions. For, being limited, we cannot apprehend all the details of the whole. And we must remember that every old arrangement, condemned as erroneous, itself forms part of that detail. To know all the elements of the universe, with all the conjunctions of those elements, good and bad, is impossible for finite minds. And hence obviously we are unable throughout to reconstruct our discrepancies. But we can comprehend in general what we cannot see exhibited in detail."<sup>169, 170</sup> We can understand in principle that, through progressive emendation, we can render our judgements less self-discrepant and thus more self-coherent. "Error is truth when it is supplemented."<sup>170</sup> An erroneous judgement is true to the degree to which it is self-coherent, and the truth of it is increased as the scope of that coherence is enlarged.

Bradley's insistence on the continuity of error with truth might well lead an ill-disposed reader of *Appearance and Reality* to the conclusion that there is no difference between error and ignorance. Our judgements are always as coherent as we can make them; where we fail to make them more so than they are, our failure is in no sense a mistake, but merely a matter of ignorance.

This would be to overlook the point that in an erroneous judgement there is present an insistence that the judgement is true, not erroneous. "For the point of error, when all is said, lies in this very insistence on the partial and discrepant, and this discordant emphasis will fall outside of every possible rearrangement. I admit this objection, and I endorse it. The problem of error cannot be solved by an enlarged scheme of relations."<sup>172</sup> That could not be the whole of the solution, because it is just the insistence on what is self-discrepant that sustains the conviction that an erroneous judgement is not in error, or is, at least, not as

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erroneous as it is. Any emendation of the judgement in the direction of more self-coherence will dissipate that insistence, to be sure; but the fact of the past existence of it will remain.

Thus Bradley recognizes that it is not enough to explain the ontological nature of error. Take any view of that question you prefer, and a further question still remains; namely, why a man who is in error feels or insists that he is in the right? Bradley answers that "Error is, but is not barely what it takes itself to be. And its mere onesidedness again is but a partial emphasis, a note of insistence which contributes, we know not how, to the greater energy of life. And, if so, the whole problem has, so far, been disposed of."<sup>173</sup> This follows because the insistence itself, in being but a one-sided emphasis, *ipso facto* is differentiated from, and thereby related to, all else. Thus while the fatuous insistence characteristic of any erroneous judgement is real and forcible, still, at the same time, the relational status of it within Appearance is in no wise peculiar, but simply that of any other appearance.

However, the question of the status of error in Bradley's metaphysics is thus dealt with only "so far", and not completely. So far we have seen why Bradley holds that "error" is not the name of any special sort of appearance. The question remains as to how the self-discrepant may be taken up into the Absolute. For, as Bradley reminds us in this connection, "the Absolute is not, and cannot be thought as, any scheme of relations. If we keep to these, there is no harmonious unity in the whole. The Absolute is beyond a mere arrangement, however well compensated, though an arrangement is assuredly one aspect of its being. Reality consists, as we saw, in a higher experience, superior to the distinctions which it includes and overrides."<sup>172</sup> Yet, since relations, however badly mistaken and mixed up in judgement, still are relations, there remains the question as to how such judgements, along with all appearances, stand to the Absolute.

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We shall follow Bradley in deferring consideration of this question to a subsequent chapter. At the close of his discussion of *Error* (ch. XVI), Bradley foreshadows the answer he gives to the question thus deferred. "We have pointed out that it is at least possible for errors to correct themselves, and, as such, to disappear in a higher experience. But, if so, we *must* affirm that they are thus absorbed and made good. For what is *possible*, and what a general principle compels us to say *must* be, that certainly *is*."<sup>173</sup>

With the nature and status of error and irrelevance thus considered and partially, at least, accounted for in Bradley's view of the matter, we may now turn to the dialectic of degrees of truth and reality. That truth for us may be in no case absolute, we have noticed in several connections; and here, at the beginning of his theory of truth, Bradley reminds us that there may be no degrees in the Absolute. "The Absolute, considered as such, has of course no degrees; for it is perfect, and there can be no more or less in perfection (chapter XX). Such predicates belong to, and have a meaning only in the world of appearance."<sup>318</sup> What is itself absolutely, may not be itself "more or less". On the contrary, no relational fact ever is less than absolutely self-coherent. Hence, in no judgement, properly so called, may the connotation of the predicate term coincide wholly with that of the subject term. No matter how fully self-coherent the terms of a judgement may be, "there is still a difference, unremoved, between the subject and the predicate, a difference which, while it persists, shows a failure in thought, but which, if removed, would wholly destroy the special thinking".<sup>319</sup> For were there no self-discrepancy in sentient process, there would be no self-transcendence. And without the transcendence of the "that" by the "what", there would be no thinking. "We have already perceived the main nature of the process of thinking. Thought essentially consists in the separation of the 'what' from the 'that'.



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It may be said to accept this dissolution as its effective principle."<sup>311</sup>

Consequently, no judgement may but fall short of full self-coherence. "We may put this otherwise by laying down that any categorical judgement must be false. The subject and the predicate, in the end, cannot either *be* the other. If however we stop short of this goal, our judgement has failed to reach truth; while, if we attained it, the terms and their relations would have ceased. And hence all our judgements, to be true, must become conditional. The predicate, that is, does not hold unless by the help of something else. And this 'something else' cannot be stated, so as to fall inside even a new and conditional predicate."<sup>320\*</sup> No matter how elaborately a judgement might be expanded by the progressive emendation of it, still there would remain "something else" which fell beyond that judgement; for no judgement may be more than relational, or less than absolute. The conditional nature of judgement is the relational nature of process. And the scope of the relational regress in virtue of which any relational situation is itself, we have seen to be endless for the way of thought that is ineluctably ours. Although a given judgement,  $J^1$ , may be so expanded as to exhibit, in  $J^2$ , many qualities and relations relevant to (and, therefore, conditions of)  $J^1$ , still the truth of  $J^2$  can only fall short of being absolute. ✓

To be sure, on Bradley's view, it is not inconceivable that this process of expansion, by the progressive emendation of increasingly comprehensive judgements, might lead to a concrete universal that fell but little short of being absolutely self-coherent. Even so, there would remain a "something else" not comprehended by that all-but omniscient judgement. This something else would be, of course, reality not as relational and self-coherent more or less, but reality as

\* "Even metaphysical statements about the Absolute, I would add, are not strictly categorical." P. 320 n.

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unconditioned and absolute. "But with this we have arrived at the meeting ground of error and truth. There will be no truth which is entirely true, just as there will be no error which is totally false. With all alike, if taken strictly, it will be a question of amount, and will be a matter of more or less. Our thoughts certainly, for some purposes, may be taken as wholly false, or again as quite accurate; but truth and error, measured by the Absolute, must each be subject always to degree. Our judgements, in a word, can never reach as far as perfect truth, and must be content to enjoy more or less of *Validity*."<sup>320, 321</sup> The criterion of absolute truth being the Absolute, truth unqualified would exist in a judgement whose subject and predicate terms were identical. Absolute truth would be the knowing and the being in one of an omniscient tautology.

If, out of carelessness, haste in speaking, or in virtue of habitual references to a set of partial standards, we advance judgements as though they were quite true or wholly false, this is permissible only in so far as it may prove useful and convenient. But no such usage is admissible in metaphysics; nor is it in any way a comment on metaphysical principles. Judgements are true as appearances are real. To the degree, or to the extent, to which a judgement is comprehensively self-coherent, it is true; and, *mutatis mutandis*, this is so of any appearance whatever.

There is but one absolute individual, the Absolute. Ultimate reality alone is wholly individual; for it alone is absolute in its identity with itself. "Perfection of truth and reality has in the end the same character. It consists in positive, self-subsisting individuality. . . . Truth must exhibit the mark of internal harmony, or again, the mark of expansion and all-inclusiveness. And these two characteristics are diverse aspects of a single principle. That which contradicts itself, in the first place, jars, because the whole, immanent within it, drives its parts into collision. And the

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way to find harmony, as we have seen, is to redistribute these discrepancies in a wider arrangement. But, in the second place, harmony is incompatible with restriction and finitude. For that which is not all-inclusive must by virtue of its essence internally disagree; and if we reflect, the reason of this becomes plain. That which exists in a whole has external relations. Whatever it fails to include in its own nature, must be related to it by the whole, and related externally. Now these extrinsic relations, on the one hand, fall outside of itself, but, upon the other hand, cannot do so. For a relation must at both ends affect, and pass into, the being of its terms. And hence the inner essence of what is finite itself both is, and is not, the relations which limit it. Its nature is hence incurably relative, passing, that is, beyond itself, and importing, again, into its own core a mass of foreign connections. Thus to be defined from without is, in principle, to be distracted within.”<sup>321, 322</sup>

The length of this quotation may be justified in so far as in it we find the internality of relations to be the content of judgement and so of truth. Anything less than the systematic whole of qualities in relation will have relations which *fall beyond* that relational situation; relations which are “*external*” to (but not *separate* from) the contents of that situation. Since these extrinsic relations contribute to the identity of that situation no less than do those which lie within it, the situation, in being limited from without, is distracted within itself. And so, here again we have the contrariety that is of the being or essence of relational experience. Any quality, however comparatively simple or however elaborate it may be, will be at once itself as felt immediacy, while, at the same time, it transcends itself in being the relations by which it is differentiated from all else. It is not surprising, then, that the internality of relations should constitute the content of judgement and so of truth. For the identity of any appearance, however coherent it be,

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still is relational. But for all that, the internality of relations does not supply us with a criterion of truth: rather, it carries that criterion with it, therein to be found and understood. And, since the criterion of absolute reality is an Individual that is absolutely self-sustaining, the criterion of truth and reality, for Bradley, is not far to seek. The more comprehensive in intension and extension a relational situation becomes, the more fully real it is. For to the degree to which it is inclusive, a relational situation approaches absolute, self-sustaining reality. Likewise, as a judgement is expanded in relevance, it loses in irrelevance in becoming thus more fully coherent. This "internal harmony", or self-coherence, is the truth of that judgement. "Comprehensiveness" and "internal self-coherence", or "harmony", are different names not of as many difference criteria, but rather of a single principle, that of degrees of coherence within and among the concrete universals that constitute the self-fulfilling processes that are Appearance at every level short of their absolute self-fulfilment in the Absolute harmony that is Reality.

## CHAPTER VI

# Identity in Difference

THE title of this chapter designates the logical principle of the internality of quality and relation that is the coherence of degrees of truth and reality. Some understanding of that principle will carry us further into Bradley's theory of truth, and it will also prepare us the better to ask about how, in Bradley's own metaphysics, the relational stands to the Absolute.

Bradley holds that philosophy is an attempt to gain a view of reality that will satisfy the intellect. He finds, we have seen, one mark, albeit a negative one, of what is intellectually satisfactory. The intellect rejects the self-contradictory, and accepts the self-consistent. But just what is the contradictory? We have seen something of the answer Bradley gave to that question in the *Logic*. Now we turn to his most extensive discussion of the matter; namely, Note A appended to *Appearance and Reality*.

Contradiction is not explicable in terms of opposites. "If we are asked 'What is contrary or contradictory?' (I do not find it necessary here to distinguish between these), the more we consider the more difficult we find it to answer. 'A thing cannot be or do two opposites at once and in the same respect'—this reply at first sight may seem clear, but on reflection may threaten us with an unmeaning circle. For what are 'opposites' except the adjectives which the thing cannot so combine? Hence we have said no more than that we in fact find predicates which in fact will not go together, and our further introduction of their 'opposite' nature

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seems to add nothing."<sup>500</sup> To say of predicates that they are "opposites" is to explain nothing about those predicates or about anything else.

The view that opposites are predicates that cannot be united is shortsighted. For "if one arrangement has made them opposite, a wider arrangement may perhaps unmake their opposition, and may include them all at once and harmoniously."<sup>500</sup> The mistake that takes opposites to be opposed eternally is the mistake that takes diverse beings to be merely other than each other, unmediated by any common ground. But no beings are thus merely external to each other; no beings are wholly themselves and simply not each other. Rather, beings are different, and different beings may and do exist in a unity.

If there is to be a unity of any sort, then "otherness" must be a word without a referent; and the fact of unity is a fact whose actuality is beyond dispute. But a whole can hardly be the blank of vacuous homogeneity. Without internal distinction, there would be nothing within the whole that it could unite. "‘A thing cannot without an internal distinction be (or do)\* two different things, and differences cannot belong to the same thing in the same point unless in that point there is diversity. The appearance of such a union may be fact, but is for thought a contradiction.’ This is the thesis which to me seems to contain the truth about the contrary, and I will now try to recommend this thesis to the reader."<sup>501</sup> Were a whole without internal diversity, there would be nothing in it to be united; and that there may be a union of differences, there must be diversity within that unity.

This thesis is not a statement of the Law of (abstract) Identity. That law states no more than the emptiest of tautologies, A is A. "Thought most certainly does not demand mere sameness, which to it would be nothing. A

\* "This addition is superfluous." Footnote, p. 501.

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bare tautology (Hegel has taught us this, and I wish we could all learn it) is not even so much as a poor truth or a thin truth. It is not a truth in any way, in any sense, or at all. Thought involves analysis and synthesis, and if the Law of Contradiction forbade diversity, it would forbid thinking altogether. And with this too necessary warning I will turn to the other side of the difficulty. Thought cannot do without differences, but on the other hand it cannot make them. And, as it cannot make them, so it cannot receive them merely from the outside and ready-made. Thought demands to go *proprio motu*, or, what is the same thing, with a ground and reason. Now to pass from A to B, if the ground remains external, is for thought to pass with no ground at all. But if, again, the external fact of A's and B's conjunction is offered as a reason, then that conjunction itself creates the same difficulty. For thought's analysis can respect nothing, nor is there any principle by which at a certain point it should arrest itself or be arrested. Every distinguishable aspect becomes therefore for thought a diverse element to be brought to unity. Hence thought can no more pass without a reason from A or from B to its conjunction, than before it could pass groundlessly from A to B. The transition, being offered as a mere datum, or effected as a mere fact, is not thought's own self-movement. Or in other words, because for thought no ground can be merely external, the passage is groundless. Thus A and B and their conjunction are, like atoms, pushed in from the outside by chance or fate; and what is thought to do with them, but either make or accept an arrangement which to it is wanton and without reason—or, having no reason for anything else, attempt against reason to identify them simply?"<sup>501</sup> This lengthy passage contains the gist of Bradley's theory of identity and predication.

In the course of all thinking whatever there is the assertion of unity in diversity. Judgement cannot dispense with unity; for, without it, there would be at best a bare association of

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ideas. And the barren unity of repetition in tautology is not thought at all, but mental inanity that is "filled in with the verbiage 'A is A'." Hence judgement also cannot dispense with differences, for without differences there is bare tautology, and thus no movement of thought at all. Hegel has taught us this, and Bradley wishes that all of us would learn it.

The formula of judgement cannot be A is A, for thought must unite differences if there is to be any movement or transition in thought at all. But if A is A cannot be the formula of judgement, can that formula be A is B? Evidently not. For B is different from A. Therefore B is not-A. Thus the formula in question appears to say, A is not-A; it yields abstract contradiction, utterly unsatisfactory to the intellect.

But, it may be objected, this is a pseudo-problem which arises out of your failure to distinguish between the "is" of identity and the "is" of predication. When we say "A is B", surely no one takes us to mean that A is identical with B. Rather, we are understood to mean what in fact we do mean; namely, that B is a predicate of A, or in a word, that A has B.

Yet this comment on the matter is fatuous. For to mean that A has B is to mean that A is such-as-to-have-B. The alleged distinction between the "is" of predication and the "is" of identity enables us to do no more than change our verbal symbol for the copula, and thus merely evade the central question as to how the copula may in logic as in existence unite differences.

That question, it may be objected, so far from being central, is quite unreal. But " 'This is not so', I shall be told, 'and the whole case is otherwise. There are certain ultimate complexes given to us as facts, and these ultimates, as they are given, thought simply takes up as principles and employs them to explain the detail of the world. And with this process



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thought is satisfied.' To me such a doctrine is quite erroneous. For these ultimates (*a*) cannot make the world intelligible, and again (*b*) they are not given, and (*c*) in themselves they are self-contradictory, and not truth but appearance."<sup>501, 502</sup> These ultimates cannot be used to explain the world at all, because no one of them bears on anything other than itself. In being each one final and, as it were, all there at once: ultimate and given: each ultimate is self-contained, and thus isolated in experience and logic from every other one. Such ultimates, and the complexes they constitute without residuum, are external to each other. No one of them contributes anything at all to any other one; hence they are respectively without bearing on each other.

Then again, these alleged complexes are not given. "The transition from *A* to *B*, the inherence of *b* and *c* as adjectives in *A*, the union of discretion and continuity in time and space—'such things are facts,' it is said. 'They are given to an intellect which is satisfied to accept and to employ them.' They may be facts, I reply, in some sense of that word, but to say that, as such and in and by themselves, they are given is erroneous. What is given is a presented whole, a sensuous total in which these characteristics are found; and beyond and beside these characters there is always given something else. And to urge 'but at any rate these characters are there,' is surely futile. For certainly they are not, when there, as they are when you by an abstraction have taken them out. Your contention is that certain ultimate conjunctions of elements are given. And I reply that no such *bare* conjunction is or possibly can be given. For the background is present, and the background and the conjunction are, I submit, alike integral aspects of the fact. The background therefore must be taken as a condition of the conjunction's existence, and the intellect must assert the conjunction subject in this way to a condition. The conjunction is hence not bare but dependent, and it is really a connection mediated by

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something falling outside it.”<sup>502, 503</sup> Facts given “in and by themselves” would be facts without background; without relations beyond themselves. We have looked into the dialectic of quality and relation which constrains Bradley to deny the reality of any such unrelated collocation of (what are for him) fictions. And now we find him reminding us that any set of “facts” we may hit upon or select stands in a context of relations, not stark and alone. With his theory of relations in mind, we can understand the force of the “must” in his statement that this context *must* be taken as a condition of the existence of any set of facts. They could not be what they are without their context. For that context of relation and quality, which, ultimately, is the systematic whole that is appearance, is the relational situation in virtue of which those “facts” are differentiated from all else and thereby made the qualities and relations that they are.

That is why the mere conjunction of characteristics is a self-contradictory notion. “And any mere conjunction, I go on to urge, is for thought self-contradictory. Thought, I may perhaps assume, implies analysis and synthesis and distinction in unity. Further, the mere conjunction offered to thought cannot be set apart itself as something sacred, but may itself properly, and indeed must, become thought’s object. There will be a passage therefore from one element in this conjunction to its other element or elements. And on the other hand, by its own nature, thought must hold these in unity. But, in a bare conjunction, starting with A, thought will externally be driven to B, and seeking to unite these it will find no ground of union. Thought can of itself supply no internal bond by which to hold them together, nor has it any internal diversity by which to maintain them apart. It must therefore seek barely to identify them, though they are different, or somehow to unite both diversities where it has no ground of distinction and union. And this

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does not mean that the connection is merely unknown and may be affirmed as unknown, and also, supposing it were known, as rational. For, if so, the conjunction would at once not be bare, and it is as bare that it is offered and not as conditional. But, if on the other hand it remains bare, then thought to affirm it must unite diversities without any internal distinction, and the attempt to do this is precisely what contradiction means."<sup>504</sup>

So long as the differences in question are taken as self-contained units, thought can only recoil from the affirmation of their identity. For as respectively different and self-contained, they have no common ground; there is nothing internal to them in virtue of which they could be at one. Such self-contained units are self-identical; the formula for them is the empty truth *A is A*. And on this, to Bradley a wholly perverse view of the matter, the formula for the Law of Non-Contradiction is no less familiar and no less inane. But if, instead of trying to take experience as a complex of self-contained units, we see it as diverse expressions of a system of mutually related qualities, the whole matter is altered in principle. For now we see that to predicate *B* of *A* is not to affirm that *A per se* is *B per se*. *A* is not *A* intrinsically and independently of all else, and no more is *B*. Rather *A* is what it is by virtue of its differentiations from *B* and all else. These differentiations are relations by which *A* is related throughout the systematic whole of appearances, as *B* also is thus related by its differences from all else.

Thus when we judge that *A* is *B*, there now is and could be no question of our affirming that *A* is identical with *B*. For neither *A* nor *B* is such that they could be merely identical with each other. The identity of *A*, we have seen, implies its difference from all else, and that of course includes and also applies to *B*. By virtue of the differentiations by which *A* is related throughout within the Whole, *A* is a

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relational adjective of the Whole. And, *mutatis mutandis*, so also is B.

Within the verbal terms of a judgement, it is grammatically correct to distinguish a predicate term and a subject term. But this is a distinction in point of terms verbal; a distinction to which nothing in judgement proper corresponds. For in truth both of the constituents of the judgement proper, as distinguished from the statement of it in words, are adjectives of the Whole.

This means that the constituents of a judgement proper are related at once to their proximate subject—a perceived hammer, say—and *also* to the Whole itself. For the constituent terms of the judgement that is expressed by the sentence, “that is a hammer,” are not the same as, but rather are different from, that instrument. In virtue of their differences from it, those terms are related with and so refer to that hammer. And we must not forget that those terms and that hammer are different from and *ipso facto* related to all else. This “all” will be the systematic Whole of Appearances.

So much follows from the conclusion that relations and qualities are mutually internal. Every aspect of experience is related throughout the Whole in virtue of its differences from everything else within that Whole. For this reason, among others, the subject term in every judgement no less than the predicate term is an adjective of the real. The subject and the predicate, S and P, in being different content are related to each other by the very fact of their differences; and since S and P are different also from all other moments of process, *ipso facto* S and P are related to every single moment of the Whole.

Thus the judgement S is P asserts a diversity of connotation in the adjectives S and P; while, at the same time, that judgement asserts an identity in the denotation of those adjectives through which the ultimate referent of that

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judgement is organic Reality. In Bradley's view, this must be so, for S and P are internally related throughout that Whole. Thus in every judgement there is an identity in the differences that are the content of that judgement. This identity is the Absolute Reality that is the supra-relational fulfilment of the development of process in appearance.

Thus we may see that "Things are not contrary because they are opposite, for things by themselves are not opposite. And things are not contrary because they are diverse, for the world as a fact holds diversity in unity. Things are self-contrary when, and just so far as, they appear as bare conjunctions, when in order to think them you would have to predicate differences without an internal ground of connection and distinction, when, in other words, you would have to unite diversities simply, and that means in the same point. This is what contradiction means, or I at least have been able to find no other meaning."<sup>505</sup>

Things *qua* things are not contrary; contrariety breaks out as unity among difference develops. This contrariety is diversity, not the otherness of blank negation between two unrelated conjuncts. That bare negation yields self-contrariety: "Things are self-contrary when, and just so far as, they appear as bare conjunctions."<sup>505</sup> For such self-identical ultimates are "without an internal ground of connection and distinction"; and we have seen something of the logical results of attempting to unite any such fictions in judgement. "Thought cannot accept tautology and yet demands unity in diversity. But your offered conjunctions on the other side are for it no connections or ways of union. They are themselves merely other external things to be connected. . . . How can thought unite except so far as in itself it has a mode of union? To unite without an internal ground of connection and distinction is to strive to bring together barely in the same point, and that is self-contradiction."<sup>505</sup> That is self-contradiction for the reason that to assert the

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identity of S and P is to contradict their difference. And to affirm that difference is to contradict the attempted assertion of identity.

Thus we see that the true formula of judgement is not A is A, nor A is B, nor A has B. Rather the formula is Xa is Xb; where X stands for the systematic Whole throughout which a and b are related, and to which they refer by virtue of those relations. To take it that A *per se* is B *per se* yields, we have seen, the flat contradiction of a judgement which affirms unity of contents which are posited as merely different. Diverse contents may be united only as they are adjectives of the systematic Whole that is the unity or principle of identity in all differences.

## CHAPTER VII

# The Relational and the Absolute

IT is a central conclusion of Bradley's dialectic, and one which he frequently emphasizes, that appearances are sublated or taken up into the Absolute. How this sublation of the relational by the Absolute is to be explained is the topic of the present chapter.

Bradley writes, not once but again and again, that the Absolute is in some sense beyond and superior to the relational. For example, in writing of the correction of errors and the relation of erroneous judgements to the Absolute, he says, "But on the other side the Absolute is not, and cannot be thought as, any scheme of relations. If we keep to these, there is no harmonious unity in the whole. The Absolute is beyond a mere arrangement, however well compensated, though an arrangement is assuredly one aspect of its being. Reality consists, as we saw, in a higher experience, superior to the distinctions which it includes and overrides."<sup>172</sup> The Absolute, then, is "beyond" relations; it is a "higher experience", which "overrides" the distinctions to which it is "superior".

Before going on to ask about what it means to say even this much of the Absolute, it may be well to remind ourselves of what Bradley elucidates as being the relational nature of Appearance. As a propædæutic to the dialectic of Relation and Quality in chapter III, Bradley urges in chapter II that because relations can be neither attributes of, nor independent of, their terms, they must be internal to

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them. Relations can not be attributes because predication is either tautological or flatly self-contradictory. "If you predicate what is different, you ascribe to the subject what it is *not*; and if you predicate what is *not* different, you say nothing at all." A distinction between the "is" of identity and the "is" of predication is not mentioned as an alternative on which this dilemma would be resolved, because that distinction would beg the question of the reality of external relations. Rather, it is suggested that the relation in question be regarded as "more or less" independent of its terms.<sup>\*</sup> "But such a makeshift leads at once to the infinite process." For on it the question, "what relates the independent relation to its terms?", remains and breaks out afresh at each attempted answer. It is thus concluded that only one alternative remains: "A is in relation to B" means neither that "A" is identical with nor independent of "in relation with B"; rather it means that A and B stand in a relation that differentiates the qualitative characters of A and B respectively.

The assumption that every difference is a difference in quality, and that numerical difference is not an alternative at all, underlies the argument of chapter III, "Relation and Quality." We have seen that in chapter III Bradley goes on to urge that relations and qualities are not found apart in fact, and that they can not be separated by any process of abstraction. Mere separateness or otherness is not possible: where there is separation there is difference; and difference, to be at all, must be difference in quality. "For consider, the qualities A and B are to be different from each other; and, if so, that difference must fall somewhere. If it falls, in any degree, or to any extent, outside A or B, we have relation at once. But, on the other hand, how can difference and otherness fall inside? If we have in A any such otherness, then inside A we must distinguish its own quality and its otherness."<sup>24</sup> Either the difference between A and B, in



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virtue of which they are distinct, differentiates A from B and so "falls outside" A or B, or that difference "falls within" A and B respectively thus to differentiate them within themselves indefinitely. Hence the difference that differentiates A and B must fall outside or between them. This difference can not be numerical merely, for that would be a difference that in no way contributes to qualify what it differentiates. And on Bradley's assumption that "difference" is the name of a relation, a difference that in no way contributed to the character of its qualities would be a relation "separate" from its terms, and so not a genuine differentiation at all.

It could hardly be denied that distinct qualities cannot be distinct unless they are different in some sense. This difference, if we be constrained to say so, "must fall somewhere"; and this "somewhere" must be "outside" A or B. Thus "we have relation at once".<sup>24</sup> For in falling outside A or B, their difference falls between them, and thus that differentiation relates A and B.

In a synoptic way, the main conclusions of chapters II and III of *Appearance and Reality* may be seen to derive from a pair of alleged disjunctions. In the first of these, that of chapter II, it is urged that relations cannot be both separate entities on the one hand, and capable of relating terms on the other. And since any view of relations as separate entities entails an infinite regress in separate entities that can only fail to relate terms, this alternative is a delusion, or worse. Hence we are forced to conclude, on what is assumed to be the sole alternative remaining to us, that relations are internal to their terms; where "being internal to" means "affecting" or "making a difference in" the qualitative character of the terms thus related. What is meant in this connection by "affecting" or "making a difference in" is explained in the course of the statement of the second disjunction.

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Just as (in chapter II) there may be no relations without qualities, so also (in chapter III) there may be no distinct qualities without relations. Qualities without relations would be not diverse qualities at all, but undifferentiated and at one. In chapter III ("Relation and Quality") the alleged disjunction is between an infinite regress of differences within the character of every single quality, on the one hand, and relations internal to the character of the qualities they differentiate, on the other; where "being internal to" means being the very differences by which qualities are differentiated. Therefore relations (i.e. differentiations) must "fall somewhere". They cannot be and yet have no status. Now the differentiations that relations are can not fall wholly within qualities. For that results in the indefinite differentiation of qualities within themselves. Hence relations must fall at once within and between the qualities they differentiate. An example of the meaning of relation as thus making a difference in the terms that conversely make a difference in their relations is afforded by cell-fission. In this sense of the term relation, "difference implies relation" for the reason that to relate is to differentiate. As the differentiation of the moments of fission alters, the moments themselves alter; and, conversely, as the moments of fission alter, their differentiation also alters.

The question which concerns us here is how the relational is taken up into the Absolute. In some quarters it is sometimes suggested that the theory of the "this" and the "mine" affords an intimation, which is all we can have, of how this question is answered in the fact of feeling. It may be well, then, to consider first the nature of this alleged intimation.

We are told that "The 'this' and the 'mine' are names which stand for the immediacy of feeling, and each serves to call attention to one side of that fact. There is no 'mine' which is not 'this', nor any 'this' which fails, in a sense,

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to be 'mine'. The immediate fact must always come as something felt in an experience, and an experience always must be particular, and, in a sense, must be unique."<sup>197</sup> Moreover, "all our knowledge, in the first place, arises from the 'this'. It is the one source of our experience, and every element of the world must submit to pass through it. And the 'this', secondly, has a genuine feature of ultimate reality. With however great imperfection and inconsistency it owns an individual character."<sup>198</sup> The "this" is also "mine" for the same reason that any experience of yours is at once that experience and yours. Such feelings are immediate in that no feelings are less differentiated internally, or more self-transcendent; this feeling of mine is compelling largely in and through its sentient focus, with little felt fringe of prehensions into the sentient context of it. Nevertheless, the "this" and the "mine", the "that" and the "yours" are self-transcendent. "And the self-transcendent character of the 'this' is, on all sides, open and plain. Appearing as immediate, it, on the other side, has contents which are not consistent with themselves, and which refer themselves beyond. Hence the inner nature of the 'this' leads it to pass outside itself toward a higher totality. And its negative aspect is but one appearance of this general tendency. Its very exclusiveness involves the reference of itself beyond itself, and is but a proof of its necessary absorption in the Absolute."<sup>201, 202</sup> The "this" and the "mine", though immediate, are less than the Whole, and are in process. Therefore the "this" and the "mine" exhibit, albeit in its incipience, that self-transcendence which is the principle of differentiation and thus of relation. Nevertheless, the "this" and the "mine" afford "the sense of immediate reality" wherein, it is sometimes urged, there is intimated the answer to our question about the relational and the Absolute.

Now there are at least two difficulties in the way of our accepting this suggestion. In the first place, it would seem

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that the theory of the this and the mine denies what it also affirms. Consider that the this and the mine "is at a level below distinctions". "Both the 'this' and reality, we may say, are immediate. But reality is immediate because it includes and is superior to mediation. It develops, and it brings to unity, the distinctions it contains. The 'this' is immediate, on the other side, because it is at a level below distinctions."<sup>198, 199</sup> Now below the level of distinctions there are no distinctions. Where there are no distinctions there are no differences. At a level below distinctions, the "this" could not be distinct from the "that".

This is not to forget that the immediate experience in question is also self-transcendent. The "this" and the "mine" has two sides, "positive" and "negative".\* On its negative side the "this" and the "mine" is self-transcendent, as is any other relational situation. But on its positive side it is below the level of distinctions. And where there are no distinctions there are no differences. Therefore it is impossible that there should be a plurality of positive sides. Without that plurality of positive sides there cannot be a plurality of immediate experiences. In so far as the "this" and the "mine" is below the level of distinctions it is indeterminate because it is not distinct from anything else. And it is only in so far as the "this" and the "mine" is below the level of relations that it is immediate.

\* "An immediate experience, viewed as positive, is so far not exclusive. It is, so far, what it is, and it does not repel anything. But the 'this' certainly is used also with a negative bearing. It may mean 'this one', in distinction from that one and the other one. And here it shows obviously an exclusive aspect, and it implies an external and negative relation. But every such relation, we have found, is inconsistent with itself (ch. III). For it exists within, and by virtue of an embracing unity, and apart from that totality both itself and its terms would be nothing. And the relation also must penetrate the inner being of its terms. 'This', in other words, would *not* exclude 'that', unless in the exclusion 'this', so far, passed out of itself. Its repulsion of others is thus incompatible with self-contained singleness, and involves subordination to an including whole. But to the ultimate whole nothing can be opposed, or even related."<sup>201</sup>

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In the second place, why does the "this" and the "mine", and no other mode of the relational, give us an intimation of the nature of Absolute Reality? Because "the 'this' and the 'mine' express the immediate character of feeling, and the appearance of this character in a finite centre."<sup>198</sup> As immediate experience, "the 'this' is real for us in a sense in which nothing else is real".<sup>198</sup> It has "a genuine feature of ultimate reality", for in its immediacy the "this" "owns an individual character".<sup>198</sup> The ownership is transitory, yet the individuality thus possessed is alleged to be genuine and felt.

But it is only on the positive, unmediated side of the "this" that it is immediate experience; on the negative side of it, the "this" is self-transcendent. The "this" is immediate experience, and possessed of a feature of ultimate reality, only in so far as it is unmediated, or "below the level of distinctions". And at that level of experience there would be sentience that were wholly homogeneous. The "this" could not be distinct from the "that"; there could not be even two contents, for below the level of distinctions all would be one.

This homogeneity of sentience could hardly be the Absolute into which all differences are sublated. "Both the 'this' and reality, we may say, are immediate. But reality is immediate because it includes and is superior to mediation. It develops, and it brings to unity, the distinctions it contains."<sup>198, 199</sup> Thus Reality is said at once to comprehend and be superior to the distinctions it contains. But the "this" contains no distinctions. "The 'this' is immediate, on the other side, because it is at a level below distinctions."<sup>199</sup> The contrast is fairly broad. Reality includes in its superiority the distinctions it contains. The "this" contains no distinctions; it is below them all.

Nevertheless, it may be urged, the "this" does afford an intimation by analogy of the nature of the real. In so

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far as the "this" is unmediated by distinctions it is immediate and homogeneous and therefore one. The Absolute is one. Thus we may see that Appearance is to Reality as the negative or mediated side of the "this" is to the positive or unmediated side of it. But this suggestion is anything but helpful. How does the relational, the mediated, the self-transcendent aspect of the "this" stand to the aspect of it that is undifferentiated, homogeneous, and wholly one? How can any such immediacy be at once devoid of internal differences and possessed of internal relations by which it could transcend itself and exist at a relational level? Without differentiation or mediation there are and can be no relations. At a level below distinctions, sentience would be below relations. It would be out of all relation; it could not stand to anything at all. On the side of the "this" and the "mine" the proposed analogy is vitiated by the nature of the case.

On the side of Appearance and the Absolute the analogy is likewise unavailing. For "to the ultimate whole nothing can be opposed, or even related".<sup>201</sup> The Absolute, being absolute, is not relational. But what is the analogy proposed if not a relation? Appearance is to the Absolute as the mediated is to the immediate in the "this" and the "mine". And even if this analogy were instructive, it still would be fatal to the character of the Absolute as absolute. For if the Absolute stood in any relation at all, *ipso facto* it would be relational and appearance, and thus fail to be absolute. The proposed analogy can only fail to answer the question as to how Appearance can be taken up into, resolved, made one with, or comprehended in the Absolute. For the analogy in question would establish a relation between Appearance and the Absolute. That would destroy the absolute nature of ultimate reality.

There are those who urge that the main question at issue in this connection is unreal; that it arises out of a failure to

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understand. The Absolute is no supra-relational being. Rather it is nothing more than the systematic whole that is exhaustively constituted by the internality of qualities and relations. There is no relevant question about how Appearance stands to the Absolute. For Appearance, not as self-fulfilling, but as self-fulfilled, *is* the Absolute. The Absolute is nothing distinct from the systematic totality of relation and quality in the mutual harmony which their self-fulfilment would realize and internally sustain.

- This interpretation, and others cognate with it, were anticipated by Bradley, and he flatly rejected it. The anticipation runs as follows: Writing of the "infinite process" in relation and quality, Bradley says: "The remedy might lie here. If the diversities were complementary aspects of a process of connection and distinction, the process not being external to the elements or again a foreign compulsion of the intellect, but itself the intellect's own *proprius motus*, the case would be altered. Each aspect would of itself be a transition to the other aspect, a transition intrinsic and natural at once to itself and to the intellect. *And the Whole would be a self-evident analysis and synthesis of the intellect itself by itself. Synthesis here has ceased to be mere synthesis and has become self-completion, and analysis, no longer mere analysis, is self-explication.* And the question how or why the many are one and the one is many here loses its meaning. *There is no why or how beside the self-evident process, and towards its own differences this whole is at once their how and their why, their being, substance and system, their reason, ground, and principle of diversity and unity.*"\* This passage would seem to make it clear that Bradley foresaw the interpretation that is in question. The Absolute would be one with the self-completing and self-explicating whole of relational quality. That systematic whole, in its self-fulfilment, would be its own rationale. Thus there could be no question about the relation of the relational to the real. For the real

\* P. 507. My italics.

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is the relational, as the relational is self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled.

But Bradley not only anticipated this interpretation of the matter in one paragraph, he also rejected it in the next. "Has the Law of Contradiction anything here to condemn? It seems to me it has nothing. The identity of which diversities are predicated is in no case simple. There is no point which is not itself internally the transition to its complement, and there is no unity which fails in internal diversity and ground of distinction. In short 'the identity of opposites,' far from conflicting with the Law of Contradiction, may claim to be the one view which satisfies its demands, the only theory which everywhere refuses to accept a standing contradiction. And if all that we find were in the end such a self-evident and self-complete whole, containing in itself as constituent processes the detail of the Universe, so far as I can see the intellect would receive satisfaction in full. But for myself, unable to verify a solution of this kind, connections in the end must remain in part mere syntheses, the putting together of differences external to one another and to that which couples them. And against my intellectual world the Law of Contradiction has therefore claims nowhere satisfied in full. And since, on the other hand, the intellect insists that these demands must be and are met, I am led to hold that they are met, *in and by a whole beyond the mere intellect. And in the intellect itself I seem to find an inner want and defect and a demand thus to pass itself beyond itself. And against this conclusion I have not yet seen any tenable objection.*"

"Self-existence and self-identity are to be found, I would urge, in a whole beyond thought, a whole to which thought points and in which it is included, but which is known only in abstract character and could not be verified in its detail."<sup>507,508</sup> The Absolute, then, is a whole not merely of, but also beyond thought; it is supra-relational.\*

\* Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 159-161.



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Yet the interpretation of his metaphysics that Bradley discards is not rejected by him because it is self-stultifying. He does not find it absurd that the real be viewed as a systematic whole of mutually implicative qualities and relations; an organic whole that is self-fulfilling and therefore self-fulfilled. Nor does he think it absurd that within that systematic whole analysis and synthesis in judgement would be respectively self-explicative and self-completed. Rather he concludes that the intellect finds no such logically stable systematic whole, or concrete universal that is fully concrete.

Everywhere and always judgement falls short of ultimate self-coherence. Any judgement will transcend itself by virtue of the relational way of thought that is ineluctably ours. Bradley finds in the intellect "an inner want and defect and a demand to pass beyond itself"<sup>508</sup> because, as he has explained over and over again, self-transcendence is of the essence of thought. That is why for the intellect to go beyond the relational to the Absolute would be for the intellect to commit suicide.

The Absolute is not to be discerned in any view of relation and quality as a systematic whole. No more is it to be found in any one aspect of Appearance. "We have seen that the various aspects of experience imply one another, that all point to a unity which comprehends and perfects them. And I would urge next that the unity of these aspects is unknown. By this I certainly do not mean to deny that it essentially is experience, but it is an experience of which, as such, we have no direct knowledge. We never have, or are, a state which is the perfect unity of all aspects: and we must admit that in their special natures they remain inexplicable. An explanation would be the reduction of their plurality to unity, in such a way that the relation between the unity and the variety was understood. And everywhere an explanation of this kind in the end is beyond us. If we

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abstract one or more of the aspects of experience, and use this known element as a ground to which the others are referred, our failure is evident."<sup>414, 415</sup> For the aspects abstracted would remain abstractions, no matter how we went about insisting that they were the ground of all Appearance. Each aspect would remain an aspect; thus it would be incomplete, unstable, inherently self-transcendent. No aspect of experience could be absolute, if only because it is an aspect.

Thus we may see that, in Bradley's own judgement, the Absolute is to be discerned neither in any phase of experience, nor in Appearance taken as a systematic whole. Nevertheless he urges repeatedly that the relational is taken up into a higher unity of logical harmony in which the inherent self-discrepancy of appearance is fully resolved and thus healed. And yet, it may be asked, what grounds has Bradley for this insistence? They are not afforded by any one aspect, or any range of aspects, of Appearance. And the systematic totality of appearances is less than self-grounded, or self-contained. But those grounds are supplied by the theory of negation upon which Bradley stands.

The result of Book I of *Appearance and Reality* is "mainly negative",<sup>119</sup> we are assured. The aspects of Appearance therein examined reveal the self-contrariety that is the fission of relational quality through which this quality that is also mine is differentiated from all else. The "this" and the "mine" is any quality. Thus we are constrained to conclude that Appearance throughout is self-discrepant or self-contrary. By this very same conclusion, Bradley argues, we are constrained to pronounce the contrary of Appearance self-consistent. Thus, in finding that every appearance is self-contrary to some degree or other, *ipso facto* we posit the contrary of our negation; namely, a self-consistent, and therefore absolute Reality.

This conclusion is truly inescapable on the theory of

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negation that is characteristic of systematic Idealism. On that theory, we have seen, every negation presupposes a positive ground. "Pure negation", "mere otherness", "external relations", these phrases are alike without meaning, for there is no mere negation. "The contradictory idea, if we take it in a merely negative form, must be banished from logic. If Not-A were solely the negation of A, it would be an assertion without a quality, and would be a denial without anything positive to serve as its ground. . . . It is impossible for anything to be *only* Not-A. It is impossible to realize Not-A in thought."\* The contradictory of A cannot be a mere not-A. Any such conception must be abandoned, and with it the empty, wholly verbal distinction between the contradictory and the contrary. In truth they are one; and in that fact we see that every opposition in psychical fact, in thought, and in judgement is mediated by a third term. This mediation of the differentiation that is a negation is the positive ground of that negation.

Now every relation is a differentiation, and every differentiation is a negation, and every negation requires a positive ground. Consequently, the relational requires a ground that is positive. Thus, both Bradley's criterion of Appearance: namely, self-contrariety: and his theory of negation, entail a ground that is self-coherent or wholly positive.

Yet it is difficult to see how the Absolute that is the identity in all differences may be in any sense related to those appearances. For were the Absolute in any relation whatever, *ipso facto* it would cease to be absolute; by the very fact of that relation, the Absolute would be the term of a relation, and therefore it would be relational, not absolute. The notion of the Absolute as the identity in differences: as the positive ground of the negations which those differentiations are, to put the same thing in another

\* *Logic*, p. 123.

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way: is as basic to Bradley's metaphysics as is his theory of negation. And without that conception of negation, the Hegelian identification of the contradictory with the contrary would lose its basis in theory. Nevertheless, it is more than difficult to see how the Absolute can be in any relation at all and remain absolute.

## CHAPTER VIII

# Some Basic Difficulties

BRADLEY'S monism is derived from his theory of relation and quality. The validity of that theory is a necessary condition of the validity of his monism. It is the conception of relations as internal to the terms they differentiate that excludes the possibility of a plurality of externally related realities. It is that same conception of relation that constrains us to conclude that every single reality is internally related to all else. And it is the theory of relation as the aspect of self-transcendence or self-differentiation that compels us to see thought, and the consummation of thought in judgement, as the ideality of the finite, ineluctably relational and hence for ever falling short of the Absolute that is, nevertheless, implied by the dialectic of quality and relation.

It may be well then to ask first about some of the more obtrusive difficulties in Bradley's theory of relations. These initial questions will lead us in a natural order to some other basic difficulties in Bradley's dialectic.

We have seen that, for Bradley, "quality" is the name of any moment of experience wherein mediation or differentiation is recessive, while immediacy is dominant. Conversely, "relation" is the name of any moment of experience in which differentiation is dominant, while immediacy is recessive. In this matter, the principal point is illustrated by the process of cell-fission. If, while regarding this, we attend mainly to the new cells that are emerging, then what is most immediate, or qualitative, in that situation will be dominant within the focus of our attention. If, to

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the contrary, our attention emphasizes the mediation or differentiation there in process, then relation will be dominant, while quality is recessive.

Thus conceived of, "qualities are nothing without relations".<sup>21</sup> Should we attempt to arrive at a relationless quality by abstraction, we could only fail. The process of abstraction is a process of differentiation; therefore it is relational. Again, we should be balked were we to "appeal to a lower and undistinguished state of mind, where in one feeling are many aspects. . . . I admit the existence of such states without any relation, but I wholly deny there the presence of qualities".<sup>22</sup> For these felt aspects, if undifferentiated, are not qualities; and if they are differentiated, then, by that very fact, they are related. "In short, if you go back to mere unbroken feelings, you have no relations and no qualities. But if you come to what is distinct, you get relations at once."<sup>22</sup> Where there are no distinctions, there are no qualities: where there are qualities, there are distinctions or differences and, by that very fact, relations.

Thus, on the assumption that a difference is a relation and a relation is a difference, or differentiation, Bradley submits that, where we find different qualities, there we find qualities which are related by their differences. "For consider, the qualities A and B are to be different from each other; and, if so, the difference must fall somewhere. If it falls, in any degree or to any extent, outside A or B, we have relation at once. But on the other hand, how can difference and otherness fall inside? If we have in A any such otherness, then inside A we must distinguish its own quality and its otherness. And if so, then the unsolved problem breaks out inside each quality, and separates each into two qualities in relation. In brief, diversity without relation seems a word without meaning."<sup>24</sup> Either the difference between A and B, in virtue of which they are distinct, "falls outside A or B", thus to relate them; or else that difference falls within A

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and B respectively, thus to differentiate each one of them within itself; and so the moment of relation would break out within A, and within B. Hence the difference that differentiates A and B can only fall "outside", or between them, and so "we have relation at once".<sup>24</sup>

Thus, to return again to our example, in the incipience of a process of cell-fission, the incipient differentiation "must fall somewhere". And it falls "outside" or "between" the incipient cells in the observable sense that it is what differentiates them. As soon as we see this, then (on the assumption that differentiation, or difference in process, is relation), we are aware of relation at once. For we are then aware of the difference in virtue of which the incipient qualities are differentiated, or related. In this sense of the term "relation", were a quality without relations, it would be in no wise different from anything else, and so would fail to be anything at all.

To be sure, no fixed line can be drawn between a differentiation and what is thus differentiated. For any relation and any quality will be in process. As the incipient qualities become more and more determinate, their differentiation alters; and, conversely, as their differentiation becomes more and more marked, the qualities likewise are altered. "Hence the qualities must be, and must *also* be related. But there is hence diversity which falls inside each quality. Each has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation."<sup>25</sup>

In order that a quality may be distinct, it must be differentiated from other qualities. This differentiation is no separate relation: rather, it contributes to constitute what it differentiates. Thus, in so far as A is quality, A is not relation; and yet, that it may be distinct, A must be both itself and its differentiation. This is the reason why no quality, however concrete and comprehensive, may be wholly self-coherent. That is why, as we have seen, "A is

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both made, and is not made, what it is by relation; and these different aspects are not each the other, nor again is either  $A$ . If we call its diverse aspects ' $a$ ' and  $\alpha$ , then  $A$  is partly each of these. As ' $a$ ' it is the difference on which distinction is based, while as  $\alpha$  it is the distinctness that results from connection.  $A$  is really both somehow together as  $A$  ( $a-\alpha$ ). But (as we saw in chapter II) *without* the use of a relation it is impossible to predicate this variety of  $A$ . And, on the other hand, *with* an internal relation  $A$ 's unity disappears, and its contents are dissipated in an endless process of distinction. . . . We, in brief are led by a principle of fission which conducts us to no end".<sup>26</sup> Without a relation,  $A$  would be undifferentiated, and so it would be nothing at all. With a relation,  $A$  is at once the  $\alpha$  that is differentiated, and the " $a$ " that is the differentiation. Thus " $A$  is partly each of these". Neither " $\alpha$ ", nor " $a$ ", is the other; "nor again is either  $A$ "; for  $\alpha$  is what is differentiated, while " $a$ " is the differentiation. And this differentiation, " $a$ ", is essential to the  $\alpha$  which it differentiates.

That is why " $A$  is both made, and is not made, what it is by relation. . . . It may be taken as at once condition and result, and the question is as to how it can combine this variety. For it must combine the diversity, and yet it fails to do so".<sup>26</sup>  $A$  must be at once " $\alpha$ ", the aspect differentiated, and ' $a$ ', the phase of differentiation. Without ' $\alpha$ ' nothing is differentiated, and so there is no quality: without ' $a$ ' there is no differentiation, and so there is nothing at all. Thus we may see that it is divided within itself. It is at once itself as " $\alpha$ " and not itself as the " $a$ " in virtue of which  $\alpha$  is differentiated.

The same difficulty appears when experience is "taken from the side of relations. They are nothing intelligible, either with or without their qualities". Just as relations apart from qualities are a delusion, so together with their qualities relations are in no finite context completely intelligible. For that a relation may differentiate its terms, it



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must "penetrate and alter" them, and so be implicated in their respective natures. Yet, that this differentiation may not disappear altogether, it must "fall" to some extent "between" the qualities which it differentiates, and *ipso facto* relates. That is why a relation involves within itself a contrariety: a relation must be at once implicated in and yet transcendent of its terms. And so "again we are hurried off into the eddy of a hopeless process, since we are forced to go on finding relations without end".<sup>27, 28</sup> For, in so far as a relation or differentiation is implicated in its qualities, it does not fall between them; and, in this respect, it fails to be a relation at all: in so far as a differentiation falls between qualities, it is outside them both, and so again fails to relate them. Thus we may notice that relations, taken as moments of differentiation which are at once implicated in and transcendent of their qualities, are in no case self-consistent realities; for they involve within themselves that "infinite process" in relational identity which is the moving principle and content of degrees of truth and reality.

In an unfinished, posthumously published essay on *Relations* that was written some thirty years after chapter III of *Appearance and Reality* was composed, Bradley reverts to the "infinite process" of self-discrepant quality and relation. "A relation (we find) holds between its terms, and no term (we find) can itself simply be or become a 'between'. On the contrary, in order to be related, a term must keep still within itself enough character to make it, in short, itself and not anything diverse. And again, while the relations are not the terms and the terms are not the relations, neither the terms nor the relations can make that whole, in which nevertheless we find them. For the terms and the relations . . . cease as such to exist, unless each maintains itself against whatever is not itself but is outside. And the attempt to find the required unity and totality in the terms and the relations taken somehow together must end obviously in

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failure.”\* The attempt in question can end only in failure because neither the terms of a relational situation, nor their relation, may be self-consistent, or self-identical. For each one of the two terms will be a moment of immediacy, while, at the same time, it will transcend itself in being continuous with the differentiation by which the two terms are differentiated. Likewise, that differentiation will be internal to, or confluent with, the terms which it relates; while, at the same time, it will fall between them, and thus transcend them.

This is why “A relation both is and is not what may be called the entire relational situation, and hence in this respect contradicts itself”.† A relation is the whole relational situation in the sense that it is what differentiates the qualities of that situation. These qualities, were they differentiated otherwise, would be different qualities. Conversely, were the qualities of the situation different, their differentiation would be different. As thus determining the qualities of the situation, and so its own character as a differentiation, “A relation to be actual cannot itself be less than all and everything that makes the entire relational fact.”‡ For it is in virtue of the relation that the qualities which it differentiates are the distinct moments which they are. In a case of cell-fission, the qualities which are being differentiated are confluent with their differentiation; as, likewise, that relation is continuous with those qualities. At any two points in the process of fission, this relation may be marked off from its qualities, and its qualities thus will be marked off from their relation. To do this may well serve a purpose in practice, but it can establish no final distinction; for, on this theory, no distinction short of that between Appearance and the Absolute may be final. Any distinctions, which were marked off, would themselves

\* *Collected Essays*, p. 634 f.

† *Ibid.*, p. 635.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 636.

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be differentiations. These relations would break out, on the one hand, between the moments of fission which we had marked off as qualities, and, on the other, between what of the process would then be marked off as the differentiation of those new qualities. This "what" thus would become a quality in its own right: for it would itself be differentiated by the distinctions in question. Plainly, such distinctions might be multiplied indefinitely within process. Since to make distinctions is *ipso facto* to relate, no limit to the relational constituents of a relational situation may be established in judgment.

Yet we have seen that "This on the other hand must be denied. For a relation is not its terms, but, on the contrary, it is between them. And though the terms may 'enter into the relation,' yet, if they were nothing beyond it, they obviously would no longer be terms".\* Within a relational situation, differentiations may be found wherever distinctions break out. It is in this sense that relations pervade and determine the character of that partial whole; and it is in this sense that they may be said to be not less than "all . . . that makes the entire relational fact". Still, in no case is the differentiation identical with what is differentiated. The qualities differentiated are, to be sure, continuous with their relation. Yet, that either the quality or the relation may be at all, each one must be distinct.

That there may be qualities at all, distinctions must occur, or be made, and no distinction in Appearance may be ultimate. Once the differentiation is marked off it becomes distinct in thus being singled out; and hence, between it and the initial qualities, fresh relations break out with *their* qualities. No distinction, no differentiation in process, may be self-sustaining or absolute. For a differentiation will be at once continuous with its qualities and distinct from them. In virtue of that distinction, and no matter

\* *Ibid.*, p. 636.

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where in the process it may break out, or where it be discriminated, a fresh relation, with its own qualities, then appears. This new relation, though continuous with its qualities, yet is different from them. And thus, again, there appear fresh relations with their new qualities. The notion of "independent relations" yields an "infinite process" in relations that do not relate: the dialectic of relations which differentiate their terms exhibits a process wherein neither the differentiation, nor the quality differentiated, is absolute in its own right, or self-identical. Hence the conclusion that no relational situation is wholly self-consistent, or intelligible.

And so we may come to see that "Every relation (unless our previous inquiries have led to error) has a connexion with its terms which, not simply internal or external, must in principle be both at once."\* A relation must be internal to its terms in the sense that, as their differentiation, it contributes to constitute their qualitative character: yet, if the relation is not to disappear altogether, it must, to some extent, "fall between" its terms. And, in that sense, a relation is external to the qualities which it differentiates. The central point for Bradley's theory of the matter, that relations are at once internal *and* external, is made out at length in his unfinished essay. This is done not only in an extended discussion of the point itself, but also in an explanation of why Bradley thinks it "ludicrous" to suppose that, on his view, relations could be merely internal. We shall revert to this latter point in the next chapter.

With this body of doctrine freshly in mind, it will be the easier to see why it is for Bradley that "identity implies difference". We have noticed more than once that the identity of a quality is what it is by virtue of the relations that differentiate it—that make it the quality it is. And since a quality is *that* quality and no other one by virtue of

\* *Ibid.*, p. 641.

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its relations, any alteration in those differentiations *ipso facto* is an alteration in the quality they differentiate. For those relations constitute the context which determines the identity of that quality.

We have also noticed that the nature or character of a relation is what it is by virtue of the qualities that are differentiated by that relation. The infinite process is reciprocal. Just as qualities are determined by their differentiations to be what respectively they are, so those relations are determined to be the differentiations they are by the qualities they differentiate. That is why any alteration in those qualities *ipso facto* alters those relations.

Now this is held to be true of all qualities, and of all relations, not of only some of either, or of both. Nor is Bradley's position here at all arbitrary. That all relations are internal everywhere and always follows from the exclusion of external relations. Were it suggested that some relations only are internal, whereas some are external, the suggestion would fly in the face of the conclusion of chapter II of *Appearance and Reality*.

It follows from the universality of internal relations that no limits to the differences that differentiate a quality may be prescribed. Any quality is differentiated from all else, not merely from some other realities. Identity implies difference because where there were no difference there would be no distinction and therefore nothing distinct from anything else.\* This difference cannot be the bare numerical

\* "I am not urging that quality without difference is in every sense impossible. For all I know, creatures may exist whose life consists, for themselves, in one unbroken simple feeling. . . . And if you want to call this feeling a quality, by all means gratify your desire. But then remember that the whole point is quite irrelevant. For no one is contending whether the universe is or is not a quality in this sense; but the question is entirely as to qualities. And a universe confined to one feeling would not only not be qualities, but it would fail even to be one quality, as different from others and as distinct from relation."<sup>24</sup>

"I rest my argument upon this, that if there are no differences, there are no qualities, since all must fall into one. But, if there is any difference,

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or existential difference of two qualities that would be indiscernibly the same. Identity implies *qualitative* difference. "All identity then is qualitative in the sense that it all must consist in content and character. There is no sameness of mere existence, for mere existence is a vicious abstraction."<sup>527</sup> Again, "numerical distinction is not distinction without difference, that once more is senseless . . ."<sup>531</sup> "Without difference in character there can be no distinction, and the opposite would seem to be nonsense."<sup>532</sup> Two indiscernible qualities would be not two but one. A quality that were not different from all other qualities would be indiscernibly the same as some other quality, or qualities. The only alternative to this (if there be qualities at all) is that every quality should be differentiated from all else.

The same considerations, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to relations. It follows that every quality and every relation are unique. No two qualities, no two relations, can be the same or indiscernible. Were it true that all difference is difference in quality, it would be the case that every quality and every relation is unmatched. The contradictory of this consequence, viz., that some qualities and relations are not unique but numerically different merely, is incompatible with the conclusion that identity implies qualitative difference. For were there two simple qualities  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  that differed *solo numero*, there then would be one quality,  $A_2$ , that did not imply its qualitative difference from all else.

The suggestion that two qualities may be merely numerically different (or qualitatively the same) in one respect (e.g., hue) and qualitatively different in another respect

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then that implies a relation. Without a relation it has no meaning; it is a mere word, and not a thought, and no one would take it for a thought if he did not, in spite of his protests, import relation into it. And this is the point on which all seems to turn. Is it possible to think of qualities without thinking of distinct characters?" Bradley answers (p. 25) that this is not possible.

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(e.g., saturation), plainly fails to meet the requirement that *all* difference be difference in quality. On that requirement every difference would be unique; no quality or relation could be matched. In his *Logic*, Bradley says that the first of the principles of reasoning is that what is true in one context is true in another context.\* His relational view of identity on which identity implies qualitative difference is, then, absurd; for on it what is true in one context may not be so in any other. The attempt to maintain that a quality or a relation in this context may be partially the same in that context, can hardly succeed. The "part" or "respect" or "aspect" that is said to be the same in this context and in that one, is enumerably different in the two contexts; and yet, by hypothesis, it is qualitatively identical in them both. Hence the "part" or "respect" or "aspect" that is in question in the second context does imply its qualitative difference from that given in the first context. Thus the notion of partial sameness affords no escape from the conclusion that identity implies qualitative difference, and the converse of it that qualitative difference implies uniqueness.

To those who find in their experience qualities and relations that are strictly speaking the same or exactly matched, this consequence of the conclusion that identity implies qualitative difference will be a difficulty in Bradley's dialectic. That difficulty, or the exclusion by Bradley's doctrine of qualities and relations that are the same in the sense that they differ *solo numero*, raises a question about the validity of his alleged demonstration that all relations are internal.

At the outset of the preceding chapter, we noticed that the main arguments of that demonstration stem from a pair of proposed disjunctions. The first of these is that presented

\* "What is true in one context is true in another, and what holds of a subject within an experiment is valid also beyond that experiment." p. 470.

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in chapter II of *Appearance and Reality*. On the one hand, it is there argued that relations cannot be both separate and capable of relating terms. And this alternative is rejected because any view of relations as separate entities entails an infinite regress in entities that can only fail to relate terms. On the other hand, it is argued, on what is assumed to be the sole remaining alternative, that relations are internal to their terms. Bradley's explanation of what this means is given in the course of the statement of the second one of the two disjunctions that are in question.

After having shown there can be no relations that are without qualities, Bradley proceeds (in chapter III) to urge that distinct qualities without relations are impossible. In this connection, the alleged disjunction is between the alternative of an infinite process of differences "within" every single quality on the one hand, and relations that are internal to qualities, on the other hand; where being "internal to" means what is meant by being the difference that differentiates the qualities thus related. Differentiations must "fall somewhere". They may not fall wholly "within" the qualities they relate, for that would be to differentiate qualities within themselves in an indefinite "process of fission". The sole remaining alternative, it is alleged, is that on which relations partially would "fall between" the qualities they relate and thus be a difference between them. In this sense of the term "relation", relations are qualitative differences, and qualitative differences are relations.

Even though the exclusion in chapter II of the alternative of separate relations be regarded as final, still the alternative on which relations would be internal to their terms, in the sense that any alteration in a relation must make a *qualitative* difference in its terms, is not the sole alternative that remains. For there is the further alternative on which an alteration in a relation might entail a merely *numerical* difference in its terms. On this alternative, a relation might be altered



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in character while its new terms would remain no more than numerically different from the old ones. The disjunction of chapter II between relations as separate, termless entities, on the one hand, and relations as making a qualitative difference in their terms, on the other, is thus vitiated by the fact of an alternative which it does not exclude; namely, that on which relations make a difference in their terms that is not qualitative, but numerical merely. ✓

The disjunction of chapter II likewise fails to exclude the alternative of numerical difference. The truism that distinct qualities must be different does not imply that distinct qualities can only be different in nature. Thus, although relations without terms, and qualities in no sense different are indeed delusions, the exclusion of them by the arguments of chapters II and III does not suffice to establish as the final alternative that on which terms and their relations mutually differentiate themselves in point of quality. For there remains the further alternative on which a relation requires terms that may be no more than numerically different from other qualities, while at the same time terms are related by relations that may be no more than numerically different from other relations. This would seem to satisfy the logic of Bradley's requirement that relations relate terms, and that distinct qualities should be different.

Some Idealists will reply to this that any notion of mere numerical difference is nonsensical on Bradley's theory of identity as relational. And that is even obvious. But it ought to be clear enough to students of Bradley that his doctrine of relational identity is no absolute fulguration of spirit. Relational identity is the moment of immediacy in the process of mediation that is the internality of relations. The doctrine that identity is relational is one with the internality of relations: it designates and lays emphasis on the essentially mediated character of the identity of any appearance.

If an "external relation" be considered not as a "separate"

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entity, but as a universal that requires at least some pair of terms or other for its illustration, then Bradley begs the question of external relations by his doctrinaire assumption that all differences are differences in quality. Now to say this is not even to question, much less to deny, the validity of the arguments of chapter II against the reality of relations as separate, termless entities. Any such notion about relations would be a delusion indeed. The point is simply that a denial of reality to such entities and their exclusion from theory constrains us to accept Bradley's theory of relations if and only if it is the sole remaining alternative. And that is not the case.

Let us acknowledge that relations require terms. External relations as separate, termless entities are the merest of chimeras. How much follows from this? At least that any relation requires some terms or other. A relation with no terms of any sort would be verbiage. But this much falls far short of what Bradley is concerned to demonstrate by the method of exclusion; namely, that relations and qualities mutually differentiate and thus determine the qualitative character of each other—with the consequence that identity implies qualitative difference.

Bradley's arguments do indeed exclude the alternative of separate relations, either as found in experience or as produced there by abstraction. But that much leaves something more to the matter than the alternative that is elucidated by Bradley. Before the view that qualities and relations are such that the identity of any quality (or any relation) implies its qualitative difference from all else, our position is not ineluctable. For all that the exclusion of separate relations proves to the contrary, a quality and a relation may be no more than numerically different from other qualities and relations.

We are assured by Bradley that "numerical difference" is nonsense. That it surely is, *within* the system of Bradley's

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dialectic. Two qualities differing *solo numero* would violate the requirement that identity imply qualitative difference. And "numerical difference" would be misguided nonsense in any case if the alternative view of relations that Bradley elucidates showed the alternative of qualities and relations that are enumerably, not qualitatively, different to be self-stultifying. That much is shown in the matter of relations as separate entities. But Bradley's dialectic of relations excludes the alternative of numerical difference, not by stultifying it, but by the assumption that all difference is difference in quality.

So far, the requirement that identity imply qualitative difference has been referred to as a consequence of Bradley's theory of quality and relation. That requirement can be brought out as a consequence of the dialectic of relations because the dialectic must assume it to be the dialectic it is. The reason why there could not be two processes of cell-fission that were in every qualitative respect the same is that Bradley takes it for granted that to differentiate is to make a difference that is a qualitative difference. This presupposition excludes the very possibility of two processes of development that would differ *solo numero*. For the qualities and relations constituting those processes would be enumerably different merely; they would not differ in character.

Consider that in two processes which were the same in character, the qualities could be differentiated by differences that fell at once within and between those qualities. Thus we would "have relation at once".<sup>24</sup> And in that unity of immanence *within* quality and transcendence *of* quality which is the very being of relation we would have the self-discrepancy of all relations. On the other hand, qualities would be both within and transcendent of their relations. And this would yield the self-discrepancy in the aspect of immediacy that is the fate also of quality. "We have found

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that qualities, taken without relations, have no intelligible meaning. Unfortunately, taken together with them, they are equally unintelligible. They cannot, in the first place, be wholly resolved into the relations."<sup>25</sup> "Hence the qualities must be, and must *also* be related. But there is hence a diversity which falls inside each quality. Each has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation. It may be taken as at once condition and result, and the question is as to how it can combine this variety. For it must combine the diversity, and yet it fails to do so."<sup>26</sup> Bradley's elucidation of the principle of this failure has been quoted above. Because self-transcendence is self-discrepancy, and because quality transcends itself in relation, quality is self-discrepant. Quality must be "both made, and not made, what it is by relation".<sup>26</sup> It must be made by relation in that without relations a quality would be undifferentiated. It must be not made by relation in that the relations must fall beyond the quality and be something in their own right. That is why quality is self-transcendent. And whatever is self-transcendent *ipso facto* is self-discrepant. ✓

Bradley brings out the same consequences on the side of relation. The burden of chapter III is the mutual self-transcendence of quality and relation. Quality without relation would be nothing, for it would be undifferentiated. Were the relation contained wholly within the quality, the relation would be merely internal to the quality. In that case, the relation would be wholly quality, and so it would fail to be relation. Therefore, relations must fall between the qualities they relate. In so far as relations are the self-transcendent aspect of quality they are relations and not self-discrepant. But in so far as they are in and of the qualities they differentiate, relations transcend themselves and thus they are self-discrepant. Now in the course of the entire elucidation of the mutual self-discrepancy of quality and relation, no demonstration that all difference is differ-

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ence in quality is advanced. The thesis of the argument is the two-edged dialectic of quality and relation.

It would be futile to attempt to demonstrate that all difference is difference in character or quality. Consider that, for familiar reasons, you could not demonstrate it by induction. That leaves deduction, and intuition. Your premises have to contain anything you demonstrate by deduction, so that method would beg this question. And your intuition or mine demonstrates nothing to the other fellow.

If Bradley assumes that all difference is difference in quality, this is not to say that the assumption is made arbitrarily. It was forced upon Bradley by his view of appearance as a process of becoming or development, wherein qualities or moments of immediacy are being related by their differences. That differences may be no more than enumerably different is not an alternative for Bradley because, on that alternative, becoming is perforce left out of account. Qualities and relations no more than numerically different would be the same in character. Hence the self-same quality and the self-same relation might be repeated in different contexts without thereby being altered. This is to say, that a set of qualities and a set of relations which differed respectively *solo numero* would exhibit (say) ten cases of a single quality, and (say) ten cases of a single relation. These qualities and these relations would be the same, regardless of their contexts. Therefore the qualities would be respectively self-identical absolutely, as would be also the relations; their identity would be absolute, not relative. Hence those qualities and relations could only be changeless; they could be *in* change or *in* succession, but they themselves could not *be* changing. Therefore they could not be moments of any process of becoming.

It is because of his assumption that experience is becoming that Bradley implicitly excludes the alternative of numerical

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difference from the relational way of thought, and that he explicitly denounces it as the nonsense it is on the presupposition of his dialectic of experience as becoming. It is also because of that same assumption that Bradley is constrained (e.g., in the *Logic* and in Note A of *Appearance and Reality*) to deny the validity of the Laws of Thought and to identify the contradictory with the contrary. For so long as the validity of the Law of Non-Contradiction is not denied, the validity of the Law of Identity of course is not denied, and the identity of A is absolute, not relational. If the identity of A be absolute, then A may not be a moment in any process of becoming.

Since, for Bradley, Appearance is in becoming, and no process of becoming may be elucidated consistently by a logic of contradictories, the contradictory must be identified with the contrary, if Appearance is not to remain, in his view, a succession of atomic mysteries. This way of repudiating logic yields a middle term between any two opposites. Once this middle term is construed as being the moment of mediation that differentiates the qualitative characters of its terms, the necessary condition of the internality of relations is laid down. The middle term has become the moment of mediation or differentiation that Bradley calls relation; and the terms thus differentiated are the moments of immediacy or quality in the process that is Appearance. If only because this repudiation of logic, made by identifying the contradictory with the contrary, excludes the Law of Excluded Middle, *ipso facto* it denies the very possibility of a difference that were merely numerical. Some questions as to how this procedure in philosophy may be justified will be considered in the last chapter of this essay.

The relational way of thought, we have seen, carries us on to the notion of the absolute Whole. This is something that transcends any moment of mediation in an Identity that is absolute. Since this Identity is absolute, not relational,

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we cannot attain it by the relational way of thought that is ours without choice. No aspect of this Whole, no coherence of aspects, however comprehensive, may be the ultimate and absolute subject of any judgement. "We never have, or are, a state which is the perfect unity of all aspects; and we must admit that in their special natures they remain inexplicable. An explanation would be the reduction of their plurality to unity, in such a way that the relation between the unity and the variety was understood. And everywhere an explanation of this kind in the end is beyond us."<sup>415</sup> It is beyond us because we never arrive at the end of the relational way of thought. To do so would be to commit intellectual suicide. For we are finite centres. "The internal being of everything finite depends on that which is beyond it. Hence everywhere, insisting on a so-called fact, we have found ourselves led by its inner character into something outside itself. And this self-contradiction, this unrest and ideality of all things existing is a clear proof that, though such things are, their being is but appearance."<sup>404</sup> The being of the finite depends on its context; it is essentially self-transcendent, or self-discrepant, and that is the mark of appearance. Yet the self-discrepant posits its contrary; namely, self-coherence. Thus the degree to which an appearance is self-coherent—the extent to which its self-discrepancies are resolved—is the degree to which it is real. The internality or coherence of quality and relation carries judgement ineluctably to the notion of a Unity that is absolute, not relational.

This Unity can only be single and unmatched. Two Absolutes would stand to each other in external, empty relation; and any such "relation" is verbiage. "Reality is one. It must be single, because plurality, taken as real, contradicts itself. Plurality implies relations, and, through its relations, it unwillingly asserts always a superior unity. To suppose the universe plural is therefore to contradict oneself and, after all, to suppose that it is one. Add one world to

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another, and forthwith both worlds have become relative, each the finite appearance of a higher and single Reality. And plurality as appearance (we have seen) must fall within, must belong to, and must qualify the unity."<sup>460</sup> Any attempt to assert the reality of a plurality of ultimates would be in effect an attempt to resuscitate the delusion of separate relations.

That the Absolute is one and single, that it is sentient, that it is a trans-relational harmony wherein all self-discrepancy is resolved, these are conclusions to which we are carried by Bradley's dialectic. Matters of final detail are questions about which Bradley expresses ultimate doubts. But he denies that the finality of the notion of the Absolute is open to doubt. "With regard to the main character of that Absolute our position is briefly this. We hold that our conclusion is certain, and that to doubt it logically is impossible. There is no other view, there is no other idea beyond the view here put forward. It is impossible rationally even to entertain the question of another possibility."<sup>459</sup> These are very strong claims indeed. But in the next sentences Bradley goes on to give reasons why they must be made. As we should expect, he goes right on to say that "Outside our main result there is nothing except the wholly unmeaning, or else something which on scrutiny is seen really not to fall outside. Thus the supposed Other will, in short, turn out to be actually the same; or it will contain elements included within our view of the Absolute, but elements dislocated and so distorted into erroneous appearance. And the dislocation itself will find a place within the limits of our system."<sup>459, 460</sup>

"Our result, in brief, cannot be doubted, since it contains all possibilities. Show us an idea, we can proclaim, which is hostile to our scheme, and we will show you an element which really is contained within it. And we will demonstrate your idea to be a self-contradictory piece of our system, an



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internal fragment which only through sheer blindness can fancy itself outside. We will prove that its independence and isolation are nothing in the world but a failure to perceive more than one aspect of its own nature."<sup>460</sup> The proposed alien would be foreign to and therefore different from the Whole. On that account alone the alleged alien could not be a separate entity, out of all relation to all else. For by virtue of its differences it would be in relation with all that from which it is different. So long as Bradley's dialectic of quality and relation be regarded as irrefragable, his monism is beyond successful denial.

It may be well to add that Bradley expresses himself explicitly in the matter of the strength and scope of his claims. "And the shocked appeal to our modesty and our weakness will not trouble us. It is on this very weakness that, in a sense, we have taken our stand. We are impotent to divide the universe into the universe and something outside. We are incapable of finding another field in which to place our inability and give play to our modesty. This other area for us is mere pretentious nonsense; and on the ground of our weakness we do not feel strong enough to assume that nonsense is fact. We, in other words, protest against the senseless attempt to transcend experience. We urge that a mere doubt entertained may involve that attempt, and that in the case of our main conclusion it certainly does so. Hence in its outline that conclusion for us is certain; and let us endeavour to see how far the certainty goes."<sup>460</sup> Bradley's claim for the finality of his main conclusion is forced upon him by the nature of his case. The internality of relations prevents us from dividing the universe into itself and something beyond it. The alleged Other could only be different from its foil, and that difference would be the relation of the asserted Other with and so within the Whole. That is why anything whatever we may mention will "be included in our view of the Absolute". For that it may be mentionable

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at all it must be distinguishable, and therefore somehow distinct, or related. The assertion of an ultimate, intrinsically individuated plurality of reals contradicts the assumption that relation means what is meant by difference, where difference is difference in quality.

Bradley's main conclusion about the Absolute is certain in that before it Bradley has no redress. But if that conclusion "cannot be doubted, since it contains all possibilities", at the same time it does not exhibit many actualities. Each chapter of *Appearance and Reality* elucidates a phase of appearance in as much detail, presumably, as Bradley discerns and can muster in discourse. That this falls far short of a realization in any judgement of the self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled is insisted upon as inevitable. Our relational way of thought cannot even pretend to omniscience and not thereby deny its own nature. The claim to certainty about the main character of the Absolute affirms no more than a notion of absolute identity in differences; and this is affirmed under a constraint that is without choice within Bradley's doctrine of relations.

This constraint does not carry us very far into the self-coherent details of the matter. For Bradley's "endeavour to see how far the certainty goes" is unrelenting but not self-stultifying. He takes up aspects of experience in some detail, and presses them hard enough to make them disclose the self-discrepancy of their content that is at once the development of all thought and the ultimate defeat of any judgement, no matter how self-coherent. The immediate referent of any judgement is a finite centre of qualities and relations. This focus of the judgement is real to the degree to which it is coherent with the Absolute. We have repeatedly noticed that every distinct content is related within the Whole by its very differences from everything else within the Absolute. For this reason, among others, the subject term of every judgement is an adjective of the Real no less

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than is the predicate. The subject term and the predicate term, in being different content, are thus related to each other; and, in being different from all other qualities and relations, S and P *ipso facto* are related to every other content of the organic Whole. For that reason the Absolute is the ultimate,\* but unattainable, referent of every judgement. The Absolute is the ultimate referent because it is the principle of identity in the differences, or adjectives of the Whole; and they are the content of judgements. Yet it is unattainable by the relational way of thought. For to attain to the Absolute would be to transcend the relational, and that would be the suicide of the finite mind.

Nevertheless, it is urged that we are not lost in a relativism that is without an attainable principle of survey and comparison. For the criterion of comparative degrees of reality in Appearance, and of comparative degrees of truth in judgement, is that of being comprehensive. "Hence to be more or less true, and to be more or less real, is to be separated by an interval, smaller or greater, from all-inclusiveness or self-consistency. Of two given appearances the one more wide, or more harmonious, is more real. It approaches nearer to a single, all-containing individuality. To remedy its imperfections, in other words, we should have to make a smaller alteration. The truth and the fact, which, to be converted into the Absolute, would require less re-arrangement and addition, is more real and truer. And this is what we mean by degrees of reality and truth. To possess more the character of reality, and to contain within oneself a greater amount of the real, are two expressions for the same thing."<sup>322, 323</sup> The earmark of degrees of individuality—and so of reality and truth—is comparative self-coherence. Since the identity of any finite experience implies the qualitative difference of it from all else, the identity or individuality of that single experience is determined by its relations within the

\* See above, pp. 126-129.

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systematic Whole of which it is an appearance. As the focus of a judgement is enlarged, the scope of the coherence of its constituent qualities and relations within the Whole is thus rendered the more comprehensive. For with that enlargement in focus, the judgement has become a less partial aspect.

And with that increase in comprehension, the judgement has become less erroneous, or truer. "Truth must exhibit the mark of internal harmony, or, again, the mark of expansion and all-inclusiveness. And these two characteristics are diverse aspects of a single principle. That which contradicts itself, in the first place, jars, because the whole, immanent within it, drives its parts into collision. And the way to find harmony, as we have seen, is to re-distribute these discrepancies in a wider arrangement. But, in the second place, harmony is incompatible with restriction and finitude. For that which is not all-inclusive must by virtue of its essence internally disagree; and, if we reflect, the reason of this becomes plain. That which exists in a whole has external relations. Whatever it fails to include within its own nature, must be related to it by the whole, and related externally. Now these extrinsic relations, on the one hand, fall outside of itself, but, upon the other hand, cannot do so. For a relation must at both ends affect, and pass into, the being of its terms. And hence the inner essence of what is finite itself both is, and is not, the relations which limit it. Its nature is hence incurably relative, passing, that is, beyond itself, and importing, again, into its own core a mass of foreign connections. Thus to be defined from without is, in principle, to be distracted within."<sup>321, 322</sup> For to be defined externally or extrinsically is to be differentiated by the relations that thus define their qualities from without. Since these relations fall at once without and *within* their qualities, those qualities are distracted within by the internality in process of their relations, or aspects of self-transcendence. This element of inner distraction is the

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principle of growth in degrees of individuality. "By growth the element becomes, more and more, a consistent individual, containing in itself its own nature; and it forms, more and more, a whole inclusive of discrepancies and reducing them to system. The two aspects, of extension and harmony, are thus in principle one. . . ." <sup>322</sup> That is why to be more and more true, or more and more real, is to be deprived less and less of all-inclusiveness or self-coherence.

The ultimate resolution of discrepancies is fulfilled in an Identity that is not relational, but Absolute. We have noticed that the Absolute may stand in no relations. For were the Absolute a term in any relation whatever, *ipso facto* the Absolute would be relational, not absolute. It is an emphasized, not incidental, conclusion of Bradley's dialectic that the Absolute is not available to finite minds. There are, then, at least two reasons why we may not avail ourselves of the Absolute as a criterion of truth and reality. The Absolute may not stand in a relation, cognitive or otherwise, without thereby falling from ultimacy. And the finite mind could attain to the Absolute only by transcending the relational, thereby committing suicide.

These consequences of Bradley's dialectic carry with them further basic difficulties. For they leave us with no criterion of degrees of truth and reality. To be sure, Bradley writes of inclusiveness and harmony, or coherence, as being the standard in question. Yet this does (and could) not mean that this standard is anything distinguishable from the very degrees of truth and reality themselves of which that standard is the criterion. The degree to which any finite whole is coherent is in no sense distinct from that appearance itself. For the coherence of that finite whole is that whole itself—that very appearance, which is self-coherent to the degree that it is individual, and is the individual it is in virtue of that self-coherence.

It might well be urged that the Absolute is the criterion

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of degrees of coherence if that Being were, or could be, available to finite minds. Yet the Absolute is something distinct from any appearance, no matter how highly self-coherent it be. Therefore, the Absolute could not have its being at any level of degrees of truth and reality. And the relational way of thought could not attain to the Absolute and remain relational, just as the Absolute could stand in no relation whatever and remain absolute. Willy nilly, without choice, we are confined to the degrees of reality that are appearance. This means that we have no criterion of degrees of truth and reality that would be distinct from those very appearances themselves. And that is tantamount to having no criterion at all.

This is not intended to lead up to practical difficulties that might be met with in the course of any attempt to apply a criterion of comparison in point of coherence. Often enough that may be very difficult to do. The second draft of *Hyperion*, as read by Amy Lowell, is more coherent in her interpretation of it than the first draft. Yet that comparison was realized and made out in discourse by one who was a poet in felt imagery and ambition. The difficulty in question, however, lies far deeper down than any difficulty in the application of a criterion in practice. Since there is no available standard of coherence, how are we to compare this appearance as being more coherent than that one? Moreover, in the absence of any available criterion, we cannot determine just *how* coherent any single appearance may be. If we cannot decide that much in some case or other, how can we compare this Appearance as being more coherent than that one?

Surely, though, *Wuthering Heights* is more coherent than *An American Tragedy*, we may be told. And on assignable grounds that comparison might be easily made out.\* But

\* For example, on the grounds laid down by E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel*.

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in that case we have posited our criteria of comparison. On Bradley's dialectic it is a repeatedly emphasized conclusion that knowledge of the Absolute is not available to us. Now we *may* agree that we do see how, on the coherence theory of truth and reality, it must be that an appearance becomes the more true and real as it becomes the more coherent. But still we are obliged to ask, *how* true, *how* real is it at any stage of this expansion?

Short of the Absolute, we have only appearances. The degree to which an appearance is coherent is in no respect or sense distinct from that appearance or concrete universal itself. Therefore, either the coherence of an appearance is its own index, or we have no index of degrees of coherence. The suggestion that comprehensiveness is the test, and that it can be applied by setting up a certain very comprehensive appearance as a norm under which the comparative degrees of other appearances might be decided upon, is really of no avail. For it begs the question. Either the superior coherence of the norm is its own index, or, again, we have no index. And if, in the case of the norm, we assume that coherence is its own index, then by the same token we should have to make the same assumption about the coherence of any other appearance; and so the suggested norm would be useless. On the other hand, if we have no index of degrees of coherence, then the selection of the norm could only be arbitrary.

It would seem that, in Bradley's view, coherence is its own index. The coherence of a relational situation involves satisfaction for the intellect. This satisfaction diminishes or grows as there is a decrease or increase in coherence. And Bradley holds that any growth in intellectual satisfaction is the index of fuller coherence in judgement. Yet the validity of this converse is at least doubtful. Even though it be established by Bradley's arguments in that regard that the higher the degree of coherence the fuller the intellectual satisfaction, it would hardly follow (or appear to follow,

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except by illicit conversion) that the fuller the satisfaction the higher the coherence. Degrees of coherence *may* be an index of degrees of satisfaction. But if the coherence theory about the nature of truth is to afford a criterion of degrees of truth, what we need is an index of degrees of coherence. And that we do not and cannot have, short of the unavailable Absolute.



## CHAPTER IX

# Relational and Absolute Identity

### I

WE have seen why it is, for Bradley, that identity implies qualitative difference. Since qualitative differences, or differentiations, are relations, to say that identity implies difference is to say that identity implies relation. Indeed, the dialectic of quality and relation elucidates the mutually relative character or identity of the aspect of quality and the aspect of differentiation which together constitute "the relational situation."

In being thus relational, the identity or character of any experience or appearance is in process. If an experience were self-identical absolutely and in its own ontological right, it would be difficult indeed to see how it could be in process. If A were A absolutely, rather than relatively, it could not change into, or become, Y. For in the course of the process A, Ay, Ayy, . . . Y, there would finally be a point at which A was no longer A and was not yet Y. On a view of identity as absolute, there could be no middle term by which this gap in becoming might be mediated. Thus one apparent virtue of a dialectic of contraries is that between contraries there is a middle term in and through which the contrarieties in becoming are incessantly sublated.

A failure to see that for Bradley appearance is process wherein the identity or character of an experience is relational and, short of the Absolute itself, never absolute, would

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blind us to the nature of his dialectic. Should we attempt to illustrate Bradley's conception of relation as differentiation by thinking of a relation as a universal that requires at least two particulars, our attempt could only be irrelevant. Defined as an abstract universal, a relation would be self-identical and therefore changeless. Evidently such beings could not be moments of differentiation in process. Then again, were a sense-quality, conceived of as self-identical, taken to illustrate Bradley's view of quality as the moment of immediacy in the process that is appearance, this too would be a mistake. For no such being as a self-identical and therefore changeless sense-quality could be in process at all.

When largely irrelevant matters are taken to illustrate Bradley's theory of relations, rather unfriendly criticism sometimes results. Let us consider the following passage from Professor C. D. Broad's *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*. In reply to his own question, "Is there any valid objection to there being relations?"\* Professor Broad considers two lines of argument. The first of these is drawn from Leibnitz, the second is ascribed to Bradley. It runs as follows: "The second argument against relations is that of Bradley. The argument is that, if  $A$  is to be related by  $R$  to  $B$ ,  $A$  must be related by a relation  $R_1$  to  $R$ , and  $R$  must be related by a relation  $R_1$  to  $B$ . On the same grounds  $A$  must be related by a relation  $R_{11}$  to  $R_1$ ,  $R_1$  must be related by a relation  $R_{12}$  to  $R$ ,  $R$  must be related by a relation  $R_{21}$  to  $R_2$ , and  $R_2$  must be related by a relation  $R_{22}$  to  $B$ . Similar remarks will apply to all these four relational facts, and so at the next stage there will be eight relational facts, at the next to this sixteen, and so on without end. Bradley's contention is that this series could not have a first term unless it had a last term, which it plainly does not. McTaggart admits that there is this endless series in connection with any relational fact, but he denies that it is vicious. His

\* P. 84.

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answer amounts to saying that the first term, i.e. that *A* has *R* to *B*, is a fact in its own right, and that the rest of the series consists merely of further consequences of this fact. I think it might fairly be said that, whilst Leibniz's argument depends on insisting that relations shall behave as if they were qualities, Bradley's argument depends on insisting that they shall behave as if they were particulars like the terms which they relate. *It is plain that Bradley thinks of A and B as being like two objects fastened together with a bit of string, and he thinks of R as being like the bit of string.* He then remembers that the objects must be glued or sealed to both ends of the bit of string if the latter is to fasten them together. And then, I suppose, another kind of glue is needed to fasten the first drop of glue to the object *A* on the one side and to the bit of string on the other; and another kind of glue is needed to fasten the second drop of glue to the object *B* on the one side and to the string on the other. And so on without end. Charity bids us avert our eyes from the pitiable spectacle of a great philosopher using an argument which would disgrace a child or a savage."\*

Professor Broad makes no reference to the text that he calls in disgrace. But he would seem to have in mind, more or less, the argument in the chapter on *Substantive and Adjective* by which Bradley is brought to his denial of the reality of relations as independent entities. In several ways, Professor Broad misconstrues that argument. *It is not an argument against the reality of relations ; it is an argument against the reality of relations as independent entities.* Yet Professor Broad introduces it as one reply to his own question, "Is there any valid objection to there being relations?"—not, is there any valid objection to there being relations taken as separate entities? In this latter form, the question has a restricted bearing: it is a question about the reality of relations *tout court*. And that one sense of the term relation

\* Pp. 84, 85. My italics.

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is the concern of Bradley's argument to the conclusion that any notion of relations as independent entities leads to an "infinite *process*"<sup>18</sup> (my italics) in relations that do not relate.

Yet Professor Broad writes of this argument as though it were Bradley's aim to show by it that there are no relations; that there is a "valid objection to there being relations". That this is so no one who has followed and remembered the dialectic of chapter III, *Relation and Quality*, is likely to agree. Bradley's argument against the possible reality of independent entities as relations is just that, and not itself an argument against anything more than that.

Professor Broad asserts: "It is plain that Bradley thinks of *A* and *B* as being like two objects fastened together with a bit of string, and he thinks of *R* as being like the bit of string." If one wanted to one could adduce "the bit of string" as an illustration of relations as independent entities. In that connection also one could write with Professor Broad of the glue, and that Bradley "remembers" that glue would have to be introduced into an intellectual conclusion; perhaps in order to make it at home in certain quarters. That way of taking Bradley's argument against relations as independent entities might be less objectionable were it restricted to that argument, not presented as reasoning by him against the reality of relations.

But pieces of string and bits of glue would hardly afford an illustration of moments of differentiation in process. So long as Bradley's critics take it that his argument to the "infinite process" that results from the notion of relations as independent entities is his constructive theory of relations, they will criticize that argument of the chapter *Substantive and Adjective*, and neglect the content of the chapter *Relation and Quality*. That is what has happened in the past. There are more than a few criticisms of the argument against separate relations; but discussion and criticism of the

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positive doctrine of chapter III is comparatively scarce and far to seek.

And so long as Bradley's unfriendly critics concentrate on the chosen argument in chapter II, it is likely they will take a relation for Bradley as being something that is real independently of its context in process or Appearance; as something static, or as a piece of string and bits of glue. For in that argument Bradley is concerned with something that would be independently real, static, and so almost anything different from a moment of differentiation. The notion of that something is what involves the "infinite process" in relations that do not relate simply because they are *ex hypothesi* independent, disconnected entities. And it is to that notion that Bradley denies any validity whatever, not to the doctrine that is elucidated in the next chapter, *Relation and Quality*.

To be sure, the validity of that theory of relations is not regarded as absolute. That theory itself is a judgement; albeit one to which we are brought by the elucidation of the matter which Bradley has worked out. And short of the unattainable Absolute Idea, any judgement will be contingent upon factors lying beyond its scope, even though that mental synthesis be carried out to a rather preternatural extreme. As judgement is contingent and true to a degree, so any appearance is contingent and real to some degree or other. Short of the Absolute nothing is absolutely real. But everything is real to a degree.

Yet we have seen that Dr. A. C. Ewing, writing in answer to a question as to which, if any, of his senses of "internal relations" were appropriate to Bradley's theory of the matter, asserts that Bradley denies the reality of relations. "I did not say of which of my senses of 'internal relations' Bradley is a supporter because Bradley *denied the reality of relations* and therefore can not have held that relations really were internal in any of my senses or in any other

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sense.”\* Apparently Dr. Ewing is at one with Professor Broad in taking it that Bradley denies the reality of relations. The consequence of this, that “Bradley cannot have held that relations really were internal in . . . any sense”,† Dr. Ewing does not boggle at pointing out himself.

It is the case that Bradley denies the reality of relations as independent entities. And it is the case that he denies the *absolute* reality of relations as differences. He denies also the *absolute* reality of qualities. As relations independent of qualities are a delusion, so together with their qualities they are not completely intelligible in any finite context. For that a relation may be internal, it must contribute to constitute its qualities: yet, that it may not disappear altogether, it must “fall” to some extent “between” them. A relation thus involves within itself a contrariety. A relation must be at once implicated in and transcendent of its qualities. For in so far as a relation contributes to constitute its qualities it does not fall between them, and so far it fails to be a relation at all; on the other hand, in so far as a relation falls between its qualities it is outside them both and so again fails to relate them.<sup>26-28</sup>

Hence no moment of differentiation could be absolute. In a process of fission no absolute distinction is there to be found between the moments of quality and the moments of differentiation. Rather there is “a diversity which falls inside each quality. Each has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation”.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, each relation has a double character, as at once making and being made by its terms. Qualities taken without relations (i.e., as absolute), and relations without qualities (i.e., independent or absolute), are both, Bradley finds, quite unintelligible by the relational way of thought. These extremes of abstraction are wholly verbal. Their reality is

\* *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXXII, No. 10, May 9, 1935, p. 273. My italics.

† *Ibid.*

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entirely a matter of words. Otherwise they are unreal. For their "designations" refer to nothing. But a quality that is a moment of immediacy which is at once making and made by its differentiations or relations is not an absolute. The self-identity of the character of it is relational, not absolute. And a relation or differentiation that is at once in and of its qualities and transcendent of them is no absolute, no isolated entity, but rather a copula in process.

'Appearance, as distinguished from Absolute reality, is relational; any appearance is as unreal as it is inconsistent, *and* as real as it is self-coherent. We have seen this much in Bradley's view, but in view of the opposition, it may be well to cause him to repeat it. At the outset of chapter XIII, *The General Nature of Reality*, he writes, "Whatever is rejected as appearance is, for that reason, no mere nonentity. It cannot bodily be shelved and merely got rid of, and, therefore, since it must fall somewhere, it must belong to reality. To take it as existing somehow and somewhere in the unreal, would surely be quite meaningless. For reality must own and cannot be less than appearance, and that is the one positive result which, so far, we have reached."<sup>119</sup> "Is there an absolute criterion?" Bradley goes on to ask. "This question, to my mind, is answered by a second question: How otherwise should we be able to say anything at all about appearance? For through the last Book, the reader will remember, we were for the most part criticizing. We were judging phenomena and were condemning them, and throughout we proceeded as if the self-contradictory could not be real. But this was surely to have and to apply an absolute criterion. . . . Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion. And it is proved absolute by the fact that, either in endeavouring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity."<sup>120</sup> "We may say that everything, which appears, is somehow

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real in such a way as to be self-consistent. The character of the real is to possess everything phenomenal in a harmonious form."<sup>123</sup>

Relations are the differences that differentiate the phenomena of appearance. A relational situation is unreal to the degree that it is self-contradictory or self-discrepant; it is real to the degree to which it is self-consistent or self-coherent. Nothing short of Absolute reality is real without qualification. But to argue that the unreality of relations (and qualities) means for Bradley that they are nothing at all would be to argue that for him Appearance is nothing at all. And that would be silly, at best. Moreover, any such misunderstanding would ignore the doctrines of *The General Nature of Reality* (chapters XIII and XIV), *Thought and Reality* (chapter XV), *Error* (chapter XVI), *The This and the Mine* (chapter XIX), *Degrees of Truth and Reality* (chapter XXIV) and *The Absolute and its Appearances*; in short, the notion that Bradley denies reality to relations leaves out of account the basic passages of his dialectic.

The phases of Appearance that are examined in Book I of *Appearance and Reality* are shown to be infected with the self-discrepancy of their constituent qualities and relations which is elucidated in detail in chapter III. Thus space and time are less than absolutely real. But it would be misleading to say that Bradley denies the reality of time. He denies, over and over again, the self-consistency, the absolute reality of any and every form of appearance. How could he do otherwise? Appearances are processes, whether they be motions,\* causes,† activities,‡ things,§ or selves;|| every process is self-transcendent, and, we have seen, the self-transcendent is not to be nothing. "Whatever is rejected as appearance is, for that very reason, no mere

\* Chapter V.

† Chapter VII.

‡ Chapters IX and X.

† Chapter VI.

§ Chapter VIII.



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nonentity. . . . To take it as existing somehow and somewhere in the unreal, would surely be quite meaningless."<sup>119</sup> Any phase of appearance—a spatio-temporal system, for example—is real to the degree to which it is self-coherent. And the degree to which a system is self-coherent is held to be the extent to which it is comprehensive.

Those who would make Bradley a synonym for their own mistakes appear to take it that by an appearance he means something static and self-contained. Thus they find it convenient to concentrate on one of his arguments against relations as separate entities (which would be static and self-contained, if there were any such entities in Bradley's view). They carry out that concentration with such single-minded emphasis that this argument alone is made to seem Bradley's positive theory of relations. Standing on that misunderstanding, they make the monstrous assertion that he denied reality to relations.

To take it that for Bradley relations are static, self-contained entities, like pieces of string, and to leave out of account the dialectic of relational fact, or quality and relation, that is set forth in chapter III, would be perforce to ignore the relational identity of every being short of the Absolute. It would be to take it that relations are self-identical. Ten of the possibly many senses which "relation", used to designate a self-identical entity, might have are made out by Dr. Ewing. He acknowledges that none of them is germane to Bradley's theory of the matter. Two general senses of the term in question, used to designate self-contained entities, are considered in detail and rejected roundly by Bradley himself. "I will now deal briefly with relations, taken as what may be called 'external' or 'internal' merely. And, though at the cost of some repetition, I will show how such a distinction, if we insist on it as ultimately valid, involve us again in contradiction. It exhibits once

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more the discrepancy inseparable from all relational thought."\*

"What should we mean (I will ask first) by a relation asserted as simply and barely external? We have here, I presume, to abstract so as to take terms and relations, all and each, as something which in and by itself is real independently. And we must, if so, assume that their coming or being together in fact, and as somehow actually in one, is due in no way to the particular characters of either the relations or the terms. From neither side will there be anything like a contribution to, or an entrance into, the other side—or again to, or into, that union of both which we experience as a relational fact. Undeniably the fact is somehow there, but in itself it remains irrational as admitting no question as to its 'how' or 'why'. Or, if you insist on a reason, that would have to be neither in the terms nor the relation, but in a third element once more independently real and neither affecting, nor again affected by, either the relation or the terms. This, I suppose, is the way in which relations have to be misunderstood, if you take them as external merely and also as ultimately and absolutely real.

"What (I ask next) should, on the other hand, be meant by a relation viewed as absolutely and merely internal? You, I presume, still in this case would continue to take the terms each one as, so far, in and by itself real, and as independent absolutely of any whole that could be said to contain them. And you would go on to attribute to the particular characters of the terms, as so taken, some actual relation or relations which you find, as you say, to fall between them. Something like this, I suppose, is or ought to be meant by a relation which is asserted to be real ultimately and internal merely.

*"The idea, I would add, that I myself accept any such doctrine as the above seems to myself even ludicrous. And to whom, if to*

\* *Collected Essays*, p. 641.

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any one, it should be attributed in fact, I will not offer to discuss. In any case, to assume it as the necessary alternative, when the mere externality of relations is denied, is (I submit) an obvious, if perhaps a natural, mistake.”\* Having given this detailed statement of the matter, Bradley proceeds to deny reality to merely external relations on the familiar grounds that, as quite external to their terms, such alleged relations fail to relate anything. Therefore mediating relations would be required and so on indefinitely. He then turns to his statement of the nature of a merely internal relation. This alleged relation, like a piece of string in need of glue, simply falls between its terms. The assumption that any such view is the sole alternative to his denial of external relations he terms an obvious mistake, and the notion that he accepts it Bradley finds ludicrous.

Relations for Bradley are at once internal and external. As the dialectic of chapter III makes out in detail, a relation is internal to its qualities in so far as it contributes to constitute them; it is external to its qualities in so far as it transcends them; “every relation (unless our previous inquiries have led to error) has a connection with its terms which, not simply internal or external, must in principle be both at once.”† The connection must be both at once because if it fell wholly without the terms (and so were wholly external) it would not connect them; and if it fell wholly within the terms (and so were wholly internal) it would be exhausted in them, and thus fail to be a nexus.

We have seen that the self-transcendence of quality through relation is the relational identity of the character of any appearance. Relational identity is other than the absolute identity of A is A. In judgement the one yields degrees of truth and error, in propositions the other gives barren tautologies. The disjunction here is that between an identity

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 642, 643. My italics.

† *Ibid.*, p. 641.

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differentiated by its context, on the one hand, and an identity that is intrinsic, or differentiated by nothing extrinsic to itself.

We have seen that on Bradley's doctrine of relations identity implies qualitative difference. Any relational situation is different in character from any other one. This excludes the possibility of two beings that differ *solo numero*. The two symbols A, and A, could not be strictly the same. On the other side of the disjunction between relational and absolute identity, numerical difference is affirmed, and the merest possibility that all beings are different in character is excluded. This disjunction is the principle that divides the relational dialectic from any form of procedure in thought for which "A is A" is valid by virtue of the Law of Non-Contradiction.

For Bradley, we have noticed, "A is A" is a barren verbalism, as is "A is not both A and not-A". In Appearance there are no absolute identities and there are no absolute contradictories. Any identity is the result of differentiation, and the differentiation mediates between that identity and its opposite. Thus, in the process that Appearance is, there is a middle term between any two moments of becoming. Any phase of process will be intelligible to the extent that this mediation of moments is realized in judgement. For that mediation or differentiation of quality is the relational identity of any appearance, any judgement, any degree of reality however abstract, or however concrete.

## II

In conclusion, let us ask whether or not Bradley can answer Hume. A discussion of this question will afford an illustration of the disjunction between relational and absolute identity. We shall see that Bradley can no more answer

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Hume than Hume can answer Bradley. Reduced to its simplest terms, the main reason why this is so is that not-p means something for Bradley that is radically different from what it means in Hume.

We have seen that Bradley denies the validity of the Law of Non-Contradiction and identifies the contradictory with the contrary. The issue of this union we have seen to be a theory of negation and identity as relational. In this matter of dialectical principle Bradley is following Hegel. "Hegel has taught us this and I wish we could all learn it."

There is no evidence that it ever occurred to Hume to deny the validity of the Law of Non-Contradiction as it is explained, for example, in the Port Royal Logic. For Hume identity and negation are absolute, not relational. Any impression, any idea, is what it is by virtue of its own intrinsic nature, not by virtue of any context of relations whatever. Thus for Bradley identity is relational; for Hume identity is absolute.

The difference here is that of a disjunction: no qualitative identity may be both relational and absolute. This is to say that the dialectic of Bradley is utterly different in principle from the logic in Hume. Hence neither one could be expected to answer (as distinguished from condemn) the other. They do not speak the same language. Bradley and Hume can be and are opposed to each other, but neither one can properly be taken to be a refutation of the other.

This is not to forget that those who derive their philosophy from Hegel, either directly or by way of Bradley and Bosanquet, take it that they can and do refute Hume and his kind. Following the lead of T. H. Green, they first demolish the theory of impressions and ideas, and then assume that Hume's negative analysis of causal inference depends, both in point of the text and of the logic of it, on that indefensible psychological theory. On two counts the

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assumed dependence in question may be seen to be groundless.

One of these counts is historical in nature. Hume's failure to find a necessary connection between anything designated cause and anything designated effect did not begin with him. He drew it from Malebranche, as his reference in the *Treatise* to the relevant portions of *Recherche* would suffice to make plain, if there were no other evidence in the matter.\* And Malebranche derived the conclusion from Cordemoy, to whom he refers in that connection.† Malebranche and Cordemoy were Rationalists and their views in psychology do not comprise a theory of impressions and ideas as copies of impressions. The line of argument for which Hume is perhaps best known developed independently of Hume's psychology, if only because Hume did not discover or develop it in the first place.

The other count in question is of a textual nature. The relevant text of the *Treatise* does not bear out the assumption that Hume's negative analysis of causal inference depends on his dogmatic psychology.† Rather it constrains us to conclude that (to put the matter in too few words) Hume applied the tests of apagogic reasoning and sense-perception to two well-known questions about experience: why is a cause always necessary? and why must the same cause produce the same effect?

Nevertheless, it may be urged in some quarters, Bradley's dialectic does constitute an answer to Hume. For it shows his faith in absolute identity and apagogic reasoning to be groundless. Since apagogic reasoning proceeds to demonstration by showing that the contradictory of a given statement is itself self-contradictory, to show a faith in that to be misguided would be to explain that the Law of Non-

\* See my *Malebranche and Hume*. *Revue internationale de philosophie*, Vol. I, No. 1.

† See my *Hume's Theory of the Understanding*, London, 1935, Chapters II and III.

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Contradiction is a snare and a delusion. Yet that is the basic issue as between the Hegelian dialectic and logic. Is the contradictory one with the contrary or are they radically distinct? These alternatives constitute a disjunction: both of them cannot be true.

Bradley denounces *A is A* and *A is not both A and not-A* as being tautologies and therefore empty. They do not and cannot represent any advance in thought; therefore they are not judgements. Now any tautology in thought will be as empty or as full as it is. That depends wholly on what a mind puts into it. Whenever *A is A* is construed in no sense whatever, but is merely parroted, it is quite empty indeed. Yet ordinarily *A is A* is used to designate the logical structure of whatsoever is self-identical. This may be an analogy; and it is fair to presume that no one denies that an analogy may give information to anyone who thinks it out.

To denounce any case of *A is A* as a tautology is to object to it for being what it is. And the categorical principle *A is A* is invalid if and only if it be true that identity is relational. The alleged truth of this latter statement is in no wise brought to light by the denial of its opposite. No more is it established by the identification of the contradictory and the contrary. For to identify them is by that very fact to assume that negation and identity are relational.

If and only if the contradictory be identified with the contrary does it follow that every opposition, every fission, in experience is mediated by a third moment, or is relational. That conclusion is a necessary condition of the dialectic of relation and quality. Without the mediation of any process of differentiation by a third moment, the mutual internality of relation and quality would disappear.

Presumably the protagonist of the Idealist dialectic will reply that his position is not a matter of assumption. His dialectic elucidates what is the truth. The Law of Non-

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Contradiction is false because it would affirm mere or pure negation. Any such notion is intolerable because it entails the infinite judgement. "Wisdom is not blue" is a case in point. Now, plainly, that judgement is silly; but that it is so on the grounds advanced by Bradley is doubtful. "A something that is only not something else, is a relation that terminates in an impalpable void, a reflection thrown upon empty space. It is a mere nonentity which cannot be real." Some of the confusions, at least, that are basic to the notion that the Law of Non-Contradiction entails the infinite judgement have been exposed by W. E. Johnson. Moreover, Bradley's own statements about the matter would seem to beg the question; as is done, for example, in the passage quoted above. Therein "a something that is only not something else" is identified with "a relation . . ." Now anything that were "*only* not something else"—a mere not—would be something outlandish indeed. But it is not in the least to defend the reality of a something that were merely not something else, to go on to point out that, by assuming this negative something to be a relation, Bradley begs the question whether negation is relational or not.

Just as any negation that does not entail a common ground, a third term, between its contents is rejected by Bradley as being empty, so he condemns any statement of absolute self-identity as being inane. We have seen that Bradley writes in this connection that "The principle of Identity is often stated in the form of a tautology, 'A is A'. If this really means that no difference exists on the two sides of the judgement, we may dismiss it at once. It is no judgement at all. As Hegel tells us, it sins against the very form of judgement; for while professing to say something, it really says nothing. It does not even assert identity. For identity without difference is nothing at all." Now this too begs the question at issue. If and only if this conception of identity *be* true are we constrained to dismiss the Law of Identity. In the passage



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quoted above, Bradley makes plain his belief that what Hegel tells him on this score is indeed the truth. Yet that is the question at issue. And that question is merely begged by the assumption that all identity is identity in difference.

Moreover, in order that he might show that all identity is identity in difference, Bradley would have to show that some cases of identity are not properly represented by *A is A*. This could not be established by any appeal to experience. For no one could so canvass experience as to be sure that no case of identity (such as that of two cases of the same hue) is properly represented by *A is A*. Consequently, Bradley is obliged to arrive at the truth of his principle by assuming it. And that is what in fact he does. His theory of negation, his dialectic of quality and relation, his theory of predication, and the coherence theory of truth are not proofs of the principle of identity in difference; rather, they are elucidations of it.

Something of the bearing of the disjunction between absolute and relational identity on the opposition between Hume and Bradley may be indicated in the following way: It has been pointed out elsewhere that "The five major assumptions of Hume's epistemology would seem to be (1) that experience may be exhaustively analyzed into elements; (2) that every simple idea is the copy of a simple impression; (3) that resemblance and difference (taken "philosophically") are neither qualifying predicates nor relations; (4) that what is distinguishable is separable; and (5) the attraction of association."\*

In the same connection, it was pointed out that the second and fifth of these assumptions state the main content of the first, and also that the third and the fourth assumptions express Hume's own view of his so-called atomism in philosophy. For Hume held that the elements of his

\* *Hume's Theory of the Understanding*, London, 1935, p. 218.

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philosophy are not connected by their being the same, or by their being different.

This is to say that the resemblance of any simple ideas to each other is not "a point or circumstance" distinct from the respective ideas themselves. Their resemblance is not "a common circumstance"; for it is in no wise distinct from those very ideas. To find that two simple ideas  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are resembling is to find that  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are the same in quality or character. In Hume's view, this is to find that they are the same not in point of "a common circumstance" that would be distinct from those simple ideas, but rather in virtue of their being qualitatively the same in and of themselves alone.

Thus we may see that for Hume "resemblance" means what is meant by the qualitative identity of simple ideas. A resemblance is any case of a qualitative identity (e.g., a perceived middle C) that exists in at least two cases of itself; and any case of a qualitative identity that exists in two or more cases of itself is properly called a "resemblance". This holds likewise of complex experiences. Experience  $MNOP_1$  and experience  $P_2QRST$  are resembling or the same in respect of their constituent P, for P is the same in  $P_1$  and  $P_2$ . Thus it may be noticed that Hume assumed that "resemblance" designates a qualitative identity that is distributed in at least two cases of itself. And this is to assume that a single quality or character (e.g., perceived azurite) may be repeated in two or more cases of itself.

Thus, on Hume's theory of resemblance, the *elements* of experience are intrinsically self-identical, and not what they respectively are by virtue of any context whatever. This is to say that those elements (as distinguished from the "perceptions of the mind" which they contribute to constitute) are self-contained, each one intrinsically and in its own right. That is why, on this view, any difference is the mere "negation" of a resemblance. Consequently any com-

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plex may be analyzed into its elements without remainder, and without thereby altering those elements. "Whatever is distinguishable is separable," on this view, because wherever there is a distinction a separation may occur. For whatever is distinct from anything else is a distinct being whose identity is intrinsic, not relational. Since this self-identity is intrinsic or absolute, it is not alterable. No more is it contingent, in any sense of the term. This is why, on Hume's view, any distinct and therefore distinguishable element of experience is separable from any other without the effect of any alteration whatever in either one. In virtue of the intrinsic self-identity of it, no element can be altered. And since resembling elements are no more than the qualitatively identical elements themselves, no analysis of a complex can either alter, or find anything above, the elements of the complex altered.

We saw that Bradley denounces as quite fatuous any notion of relations as "merely internal". In that connection it was remarked in passing that Hume's analysis of the basic philosophical relations of resemblance affords a good example of a "merely internal" relation. In this connection, we saw, Bradley writes: "What (I ask next) should, on the other hand, be meant by a relation viewed as absolutely and merely internal? You, I presume, still in this case would continue to take the terms each one as, so far, in and by itself real, and as independent absolutely of any whole that could be said to contain them."\* A quality as "ultimately and absolutely real" would be a quality whose character or nature were quite self-contained.

Any such entity would be what it is in virtue of itself alone. This is to say that it would be itself absolutely, not by virtue of any relations to anything ulterior to itself. If we take two such entities, and notice that their being

\* *Collected Essays*, p. 642.

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"related" derives from and is exhausted by the respective entities themselves, then we have merely internal relations. "Relations would be merely internal if, the terms being taken as real independently, each in itself, the relations between them (as a class, or in this or that particular case) in fact arose or were due merely to the character of the terms as so taken."\* This view of the matter is condemned roundly by Bradley as a "ludicrous" if "natural" mistake.

The theory of relations as merely internal to or exhausted in and by the terms that constitute a relation could only be mistaken, in Bradley's view, because it fails to see that a relation, to be at all, must be at once internal and external to its terms. A relation must be partially internal to its terms in order that it may relate them: it must be partially external to them in order that it may be anything at all in its own right.

Consequently, any theory of relations as merely internal is in stark opposition to the doctrine that is elucidated in the chapter *Relation and Quality*. To be a quality at all is to be distinct, and to be distinct is to be differentiated. This differentiation or relation contributes to constitute what it differentiates. So far, then, a relation is internal to its qualities. But no relation is internal merely. Any relation will to some extent fall between the qualities it differentiates. In this respect a relation is the third moment in the unending fission that is process. The third moment is the middle term by which the fission is at once differentiated and mediated. We have seen that the necessary (though of course not sufficient) principle of this dialectic of quality and relation is that the contradictory be identical with the contrary. That principle yields negation and identity as relational, or mediated by a third term.

We have noticed that for Hume the identity of simple elements of experience is absolute. Any element of experience

\* *Ibid.*, p. 665.

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either resembles or is different from any other, and a difference is merely the "negation" of a resemblance. For Hume a resemblance is any qualitative identity that is distributed in at least two cases of itself. Thus a resemblance is merely internal to or wholly exhausted in its terms: it is an example of what Bradley calls a "merely internal" relation. Thus we may see how it is that Hume and Bradley stand on the opposite sides of the disjunction between absolute and relational identity.

Since this point would seem to be easily accessible, it is the more surprising that it is so frequently slurred over, or missed altogether. As a recent example of this, consider the following statements made by Professor H. H. Price. "I now turn to the contention, that Hume errs by being an Atomist. This is an even more extraordinary muddle, and I shall not attempt to unravel it in detail. I will simply ask, what is the positive alternative to Atomism? What do non-atomistic philosophers assert? I suppose they assert that what we are aware of is always a *continuum* of some sort, a continuous stream of events, or of presentations, or what not."\* Now this is indeed an extraordinary muddle. One would have thought that in Oxford it would be remembered that "what (some) non-atomistic philosophers assert" is monism, and a monism that derives from the internality of relations. For those who identify the contradictory and the contrary Hume's atomism is perforce an error, as is the logical atomism of every other thinker for whom A is not both A and not-A. The Bradleian dialectic condemns Hume's atomism and all logically cognate doctrine as a sin against the very principle of thinking. This condemnation may be mistaken; the principle it would defend may entail difficulties of a very discouraging nature; but it is anything but muddled. Bradley knew what he was doing. And he carried it through to the bitter end of *Ultimate Doubts*.

\* *Philosophy*, Vol. XV, No. 57, p. 27.

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To see that absolute identity and relational identity are wholly opposed is to see that neither Bradley nor Hume is or could be a refutation of the other. For neither one of the two terms of a disjunction is a refutation of the other one. It is open to Bradley to demonstrate his first principle of identity in difference if and only if the contradictory be identical with the contrary. For then and only then will differences be mediated by a third term.

The asserted identity of the contradictory with the contrary can be known to be true if and only if the Law of Non-Contradiction is known to be invalid. How is this knowledge to be arrived at? Not by induction, surely. And any attempt to arrive at it by deduction could only beg the question. Since, according to the proponents of it, identity in difference is the principle of all thought, perforce it would be the principle of the extirpation of the Law of Non-Contradiction. And it is so employed as the two-edged discursus of a dialectic which seeks and claims to be self-justifying. The Law of Non-Contradiction is held to be invalid not because it is inconsistent, but because it stands as an inanè and sterile obstacle in the way of the fertility of dialectic.

To this it must be replied that a method of elucidation may be as fertile as anyone likes to deem it, or cares to make it. This would recommend it to a man interested in elucidation for its own sake. But it would not even tend to show the Law of Non-Contradiction to be invalid. The principle of identity in difference can be instituted only by assuming that the laws of thought are invalid, not by an appeal to the dialectic that denies them.

It has been pointed out above that absolute and relational identity stand opposed as the terms of a disjunction. We may be free to elect the one or the other; we may not adopt both without confusion. There are those who suggest that any choice between these two disjuncts will be more or less

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unconscious, and dictated almost entirely by matters of temperament. As some men are born little Platonists and others little Aristotelians, so in some men there is a predilection for the relational dialectic of imagination, while others are bound by logic.

It would seem to be fairly clear that no rational grounds for a choice between these disjuncts can be demonstrated *a priori*. The hackneyed point that you cannot contradict the Law of Non-Contradiction without thereby reinstating it is not free from confusion, and is of no avail at all against Bradley's position. Bradley does not first affirm the Law of Non-Contradiction and then turn around and deny it, thus to fall into contradiction. He denounces what is to him no law but a delusion, and proclaims as basic to elucidation the Law of Contrariety. This excludes the Law of Excluded Middle and affirms the reality of a middle term between any two beings. The oft-repeated point in question assumes (among other things) that any denial of the Law of Non-Contradiction will be a contradiction. Yet this is hardly the case. A denial may be the rejection of a proposal; not the unsaying of something previously affirmed by the person who rejects a proposal.

Since the logic of contradictories, as distinguished from a dialectic of contraries, could hardly exclude the Law of Non-Contradiction, any attempt to find by or in logic grounds for a choice between absolute and relational identity could only beg the question. For any such attempt, consistently carried out, perforce would involve the Law of Identity.

No more is it open to a follower of Bradley to avail himself of the dialectic of contraries to prove the primacy of relational identity. We have noticed that Bradley does not make the attempt. Rather, he denounces the laws of thought as tautologies; upon the assumption that to be a tautology is to be inane; and proceeds to identify the contradictory

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with the contrary. Yet this is done without benefit of either logic or dialectic. Clearly logic could not sanction that union. No more could the dialectic. For if and only if the contradictory be identical with the contrary is the dialectic of contraries valid. To appeal to that dialectic for a demonstration of the assumption that identity is relational could only beg the question.

So much, it may be objected, is even obvious. And in some quarters it will be urged that in the matter before us the touchstone of rational decision is supplied by experience. In the sentience that is perception or imagination the incipient workings of the dialectic may be discerned. Once this process has passed over into the stage of elucidation that is judgement, the inherent logic of experience is made explicit to some extent. This logic is (as the coherence theory of degrees of reality and truth makes plain) self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled. Anyone who understands it at all will realize its justification to be internal—and not a matter of “linear” demonstration. For the binding constraint of the relational way of thought derives from the coherence of it with itself. And that self-coherence derives from the internality of relations which is the essence of process or experience everywhere and always.

The appeal to experience, considered so hard-headed and sensible by its proponents whether they be Idealists, Positivists, Neo-Realists, Pragmatists, or members of other philosophical sects, is a hardy and widely variegated perennial. Men have been appealing to experience for a long time. In her name they have castigated their opponents; men no less sensible than themselves, perhaps, who then replied in the name of their experience. Thus Idealists pour scorn on the “atomism” of views of experience not their own. And those who seek to elucidate the content of their perceptions in terms of (say) *sensa* declare Idealists to be dim, thoughtless, or merely unintelligible.



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Presumably it is fairly plain that to appeal to experience is to appeal to it as it is understood in one way or another. There is more than a little evidence that some Idealists emphasize this point in the course of their criticism of their precritical opponents. Those thinkers construed experience wrongly because they were imbued with an epistemology that is false. Now Hume's conception of experience, it may well be agreed, is crudely mistaken. This has been made out on a score of grounds; grounds that are internal to Hume's assertions in that regard, and have no connection with "the relational way of thought". Such criticism is one thing, and exigetical; but to argue that the notion of impressions and ideas, or any other view, is false because contrary to Hegelian tenets, is another, and doctrinaire. Yet this is a practice to which some proponents of the Idealist dialectic are prone. They make the assumptions upon which the dialectic of the *Phenomenology* can be elucidated, and then proceed to establish those presumptions by showing that contrary views are not in accord with them. If and only if you adopt the relational view of thought may you correctly construe experience. For that is the only way in which you may construe experience in accordance with the relational way of thought.

This question-begging procedure is not improved upon, of course, by those who use it on the opposite side of the disjunction between relational and absolute identity. The assumption that experience consists of self-identical "atomic" constituents, rather than "relational situations", is shot through with presumptions. The main point is simply that to appeal to a doctrine about experience for grounds upon which to decide between logic and dialectic is perforce futile. The validity of the Law of Non-Contradiction could hardly be made out by any appeal to the conception of experience that is developed in the *Phenomenology*. No more could the dialectic be justified by any one or more of the

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conceptions of experience which the relational way of thought denies. In short, either you adduce an empiricism that is in accord with logic, or that is in accord with the dialectic, as the case may be, and so beg the question; or else you adduce a contrary empiricism, and so perforce miss the point of your attempted justification.

Any appeal to the given can only beg the question for the other fellow. For it will assume that what for you is given (in the innocuous but quite wholesome sense made out by Professor Price) is likewise given for someone else. But in philosophy no one is obligated to decide questions for the other fellow. And it is presumptuous or worse to make the attempt. If he is capable of following your arguments, he is competent to make up his own mind in taking basic decisions.

It would seem that there is no rigorous means by which logic or Hegelian dialectic can justify—as distinguished from explain—itsself to the other fellow. Each student of philosophy can only ask himself about the relevance of the one or the other to what he himself finds for examination and elucidation. To do this is indeed to appeal to experience. But it is to appeal to his own experience as being his own, not as something that imposes a philosophical obligation on his fellow men.

If a man finds in his experience any two respects that are strictly the same, then he finds something that is incompatible with the conclusion of the dialectic of relation and quality that identity implies qualitative difference. We have seen above (chapter VIII) that if identity implies qualitative difference, then every difference, however slight, is unique. Thus no two experiences could be strictly the same in any respect; for every experience would be unmatched in every respect. It might be suggested that the difference between this case of perceived middle C and that one is infinitesimal—in some rather ambiguous sense or other of that term. This

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would be a singularly inappropriate suggestion in this connection. For the differences that are relations are constituent differences. They are actual differentiations in sentience, not ideal distinctions. If identity implies qualitative difference, then no two experiences can be strictly the same in any respect.

Protagonists of the relational way of imagination are constrained by doctrine to deny that any two experiences, whether perceptual, imaginative, or intellectual, are in *any* respect the same. This is to say that for these protagonists every experience, however comprehensive or merely tenuous, is quite unique. To be sure, they sometimes deal with this stark consequence by saying that every experience is *in part* unique. But then the parts that would not be unique or unmatched would be matched by something else. And this would fly in the face of the conclusion that identity implies qualitative difference. The doctrine of relational identity is categorical; it admits of no exceptions. That is why it can only be rejected by anyone in whose consciousness there are ever two or more experiences that are in *any* respect strictly the same.

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